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TOKEN OR REALITY?

IT is unlikely that the American Chiefs of Staff have discovered anything in Europe which they could not have learnt more conveniently by sitting in the Pentagon and reading their staff studies. But this does not mean that their mission was useless, since its object was not to acquire fresh information, but to cajole Senator Vandenberg and his Republican colleagues into supporting the President's programme of Lend-Lease armaments. As a piece of domestic pressure-politics, this whirlwind tour may well fulfil its purpose.

On this side of the Atlantic, too, it will not have been valueless if it at last stimulates the signatories of the Brussels Pact into a searching inquiry into the principles upon which their crippling defence budgets are based. Do we accept General Bradley's view that, while America retains responsibility for atomic bombing of the aggressor's lines of communication, the Brussels Powers should set about the creation of land armies big enough to keep the Russians out of Western Europe? If so, is the defence line to be on the Elbe—in which case sooner or later German rearmament is inevitable—or are we to regard Western Germany as indefensible and be content to hold the line of the Rhine? Even more important, in view of General Bradley's omission of any reference to a British expeditionary force, is the question whether Britain is to confine its contribution to air and sea co-operation and reserve its severely limited land forces for the defence of the Middle East, Singapore and Hong Kong.

As soon as these questions are posed, it becomes clear that the $1,450 millions proposed by Mr. Truman—which is supposed to include aid to Greece, Turkey, Korea, Iran and the Philippines—is a meaningless sum. The more we study the demands of defence and compare them with the economic resources of Western Europe, the clearer we see that the scale of assistance proposed by the President (which Senator Vandenberg wants to reduce to $700 millions) is either far too much or far too little. Far too much, if the purpose is a token American contribution designed to put token teeth into the Atlantic Pact; far too little, if the teeth are intended for use.

This, indeed, is the case of the Republican and military opponents of the President's programme. In the last resort, American military strength is the sole guarantor of Western European independence; to dissipate that strength in piecemeal and insufficient Lend-Lease contributions all over the world is merely to weaken the guarantee. What is needed in Western Europe today are token forces which symbolise that a Third World War would be the inevitable consequence of any act of aggression. For this purpose, the presence of American troops in Germany and a few American Super-Forts in Britain is more than adequate. There is no point either in calling for American reinforcements or for equipping a few extra European divisions at American expense.

We believe that this criticism of the President's programme is sound. For three years Western Europe has been wide open to Russian attack; and the sole military deterrent has been the American monopoly of the atom bomb, coupled with the vast military potential of the New World. During this period token forces have been sufficient in Europe—as we hope they will be in Hong Kong—to keep the peace, if indeed there was ever any Russian military threat. If those token forces are enlarged to three or even five times their present numbers, we shall certainly saddle ourselves with an unbearable economic burden, unless, which is out of the question, the Americans were ready to pay the whole cost. Shall we appreciably increase our security? Shall we be any safer with twenty divisions or thirty divisions than we are with the present half-dozen? We doubt it. And if, to escape from the dilemma, we decide to rearm Western Germany, we shall probably precipitate the military action by the Russians which we are seeking to prevent.

The fact is that, in the foreseeable future, the defence of Western Europe will be not a military but a political problem, a matter not of preparing to defeat the Red Army in Europe, but of deterring the Kremlin from giving the order that it shall move and meanwhile creating a stable economic basis for our own survival. In solving this political problem the main American contribution should be Marshall Aid. Lend-Lease armaments, which reduce the sums allocated to Marshall Aid, actually reduce our security by pushing us all a little nearer to national bankruptcy. So, too, attempts by Chiefs of Staffs to give strategic reality to token defence plans reduce their effectiveness. Field-Marshal Montgomery's flamboyant activities at Fontainebleau serve a useful diplomatic purpose so long as no-one is misguided enough to provide the troops and equipment implied in his paper schemes. There are times—and this is one of them—when it is prudent not to call your own bluff.

Europe's Dollars

The two O.E.E.C. meetings in Paris last week were devoted to a necessarily inconclusive discussion of Britain's request for a much greater share of E.R.P. dollars. Though Britain's need is obvious, her O.E.E.C. colleagues—especially the Dutch and the Italians—are certainly not willing, without further ado, to give Britain nearly forty per cent of this year's total by increasing this country's allocation by some $600 millions. In their eyes, the pound is still overvalued and the British dollar deficit includes the deficit of the sterling bloc, over whose import policies O.E.E.C. has no control. Thus, to our neighbours, the increased estimate is bound to look like a British attempt to make other European nations carry part of Britain's immediate economic burden. But was it Britain's intention merely to shock the members of O.E.E.C.? The Treasury knows that, if the O.E.E.C. nations are unable to agree upon the distribution of E.R.P. dollars, the

allocation will be thrown back to the Americans. This move, therefore, serves notice upon Washington that the present level of dollar aid is insufficient for Europe's essential needs. It comes, too, upon the heels of a ten per cent cut in Marshall Aid appropriations for the coming year, which Congress has declined to restore. The Senate, moreover, has made a sharp reduction of the funds available for U.S. stockpiling of strategic raw materials. This in turn will mean a further drop in Europe's dollar earnings. Does the British Government, in precipitating the deadlock in O.E.E.C., seek to prepare the Americans for new proposals designed to get more dollars for Europe? Perhaps the Americans will be asked to make long-term contracts for raw materials and even, it may be, to pay for them in advance. Or, perhaps, Congress may be asked to make an additional emergency appropriation later this year. No one in Europe can feel optimistic about either of these schemes, with Congress in a mood of economy and some weariness at the continual demands of Europe for more dollars. But the British, at least, must have their eye on the September meeting in Washington—which will be worse than useless unless it produces some form of additional aid—and may be using the O.E.E.C. disagreement as a means of dramatising the dollar problem.

Washington Summer

Congress is now in the midst of its annual summer rush to catch up with the arrears on its agenda and to make the essential appropriations for Federal business. Votes tend to come quickly from Congressmen anxious to escape from Washington's foetid climate. Last week, the House gave a substantial majority to a Bill abolishing the poll-tax; but though this gesture may please the President, who must be thankful for small mercies from Capitol Hill, it is nothing new. Such gestures are made perennially in the House, only to be rejected later by the Senate. In the same week, however, the House threw out the Pace Bill, of which the Administration had high hopes. This Bill proposed a limited experiment with the ingenious farm programme worked out by Mr. Brannan, the Secretary of Agriculture. The old price support programme kept the farmer prosperous both by Federal subsidies and by propping up the market price of his products. In its revised form, it allows for a substantial fall in prices. Mr. Brannan's plan was, broadly speaking, to permit prices to find their own level and then to make up the difference by direct payments to the farmer. It would involve, moreover, considerable Federal control of farm production to avoid surpluses. Naturally, such innovations aroused opposition. Anything which strengthens the power of Washington "planners" is certain to encounter hostility in Congress; and some Representatives, unable to put their finger on definite weaknesses in the scheme, have convinced themselves that there is something dubious in a proposal to make foodstuffs cheaper to the consumer and keep up farm incomes without, at the same time, increasing the financial burdens of the Federal Government. For the moment, therefore, another of the Fair Deal proposals has been put on the file for the next election campaign, when the President will seek to harvest farm votes for his supporters by laying on his enemies in Congress the blame for the fairly sharp reductions in farm incomes which are likely to come this year. But his task may be complicated by the heavy Democratic vote against the Brannan scheme. More of his nominal majority in the House ran away on this vote than on any other issue.

West Germany Polls

The long-awaited general election for the parliament of the West German State is to be held on August 14. With that event the *Grundgesetz* or constitution formulated by the Germans under Allied supervision comes into force; and the West German Parliament thus elected will at once proceed to the election of a Prime Minister and Government. Two-thirds of the German population (occupying, that is, three out of the four Zones) will have "got democracy" again—under conditions, however, which scarcely compare favourably even with those of Weimar. Formally, at least, there is much the same pattern of political competition as there was in 1919. The two principal parties to-day as then (though the Catholic Centre had still to crystallise in 1919) are the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats; flanking these are the Communists and the Liberals (mainly the old German Nationals in new guise). There is the same determination by these larger parties (apart from the Communists, who want coalition on East Zone lines) to fight each other rather than the legacy of the past. But there are several great differences from 1919. No German will be persuaded that these are really free elections, since the Allies, as Dr. Schumacher lately said in one of his more inconvenient moments, "stick their noses into every German affair." The Military Governors have specifically obstructed the emergence of Right-wing nationalist groups and parties. The Allied garrisons are still there. In these circumstances the electoral campaign has become a panicky competition for the nationalist vote. The main enemy, if we are to take the sense of what people like Schumacher and Adenauer are saying, is not the social system which gave rise to Nazism, but the Allied military authority. Instead of turning their attacks against the men and the organisations which grew into, and are growing out of, Nazism, the "democratic" party leaders spend their time out-shouting each other on the failings of Allied military government. In 1919 the Germans were at least thinking about what was wrong with themselves. To-day they seem entirely taken up with thinking about what is wrong with the Allies.

Tibetan Prologue

The recent expulsion of the Chinese Mission from Lhasa suggests that the most isolationist Power in the world has not remained outside the stream of events in Asia. The Lamas, often big landlords, still hold the reins of power in this feudal theocracy from which all foreigners are banned until 1951. Yet one Lama—Padit Rahula, an Indian by birth—has visited Moscow, returning with a Russian wife. He spent two years in prison for his Communist propaganda, but is now a popular teacher. And, last August, the Dalai Lama launched a religious war against Communism in Lhasa, where 3,000 student monks and 100 "Living Buddhas" held a meeting and sent a telegram wishing Chiang Kai-shek success in his war, adding that Tibet could only resort to prayers, not to arms. Much has happened since those days. Chiang Kai-shek has virtually lost his war. The Tibetans, anxious not to be involved in wars and to assert their independence in the face of Chinese claims of sovereignty over their country, have acted as they did in 1912 after the 1911 Revolution in China, when they evicted Chinese troops and functionaries from Lhasa. Further, Britain's withdrawal from India means that the British Mission in Lhasa has been taken over by the Indian Government, through which Britain's relations with Tibet will in future be maintained. India has a two-thousand mile frontier with Tibet, and there are already signs of Indian opinion regarding Tibet as a buffer State against Chinese Communism. The Chinese Nationalists may still try to use their influence with the tenth Panchen Lama who is being installed this week in Chinghai. But the social forces working in Asia to-day are not halted by the world's highest mountains.

Mr. Wilson's Five per Cent

It is all very well for Mr. Wilson to meet the Trade Union pressure for price reductions by knocking 5 per cent off the prices of utility goods as a gesture and a first instalment of stricter price control. The danger is that the decrease, applied only to utility goods, may render manufacturers more reluctant to make such goods and more determined to recoup themselves by high prices in the "luxury" market. This might not matter if the Board of Trade were in a position to compel employers to produce as many utility goods as are needed, and if the "luxury" market really were a luxury market and not one to which the ordinary consumer is driven when utility goods are in short supply. For example, utility eiderdowns are reasonable in price but few, whereas other eiderdowns are plentiful in the shops, but in general remarkably dear. It is to be hoped that Mr. Wilson has armed himself with means, despite the price-cut, not merely of maintaining, but of increasing, the supplies of utility goods. Otherwise, his gesture, far from meeting the demand for lower prices for consumers, may have in practice just the opposite effect. The plain truth is that price reduction will continue to be very difficult for as long as it remains necessary, in order to get total output as high as possible, to keep many inefficient and ill-equipped firms in business, instead of allowing them to be driven to the wall.

The Railwayman's Wage Problem

The compromise over the shopmen's application of the National Union of Railwaymen was probably the best way out of the difficulty; but it does not at all settle the problem involved. The Railway Executive's offer of an advance limited to the lower-paid grades would have the effect of narrowing still further the premium paid for skilled or responsible work, which a good many people hold to be too narrow already. This feeling is particularly strong among the skilled engineering workers, whose surplus above the labourer's rate is now only about 16s. a week, and even apart from the fact that it is often easier to earn high piecework balances on semi-skilled than on fully skilled work. The reluctance of the shopmen to be bound by an award based mainly on conditions in the railway traffic departments is accordingly natural enough; and the compromise under which the tribunal's decision will be binding for the traffic grades but only a recommendation for the shopmen is sensible as far as it goes. The difficulty is that, if the rates of the lower-paid traffic workers are increased, it will not be easy to refuse an advance to the unskilled shopmen; and such an advance will inevitably strengthen the case of the skilled shopmen who, in common with other engineering craftsmen, are already demanding a bigger wage-differential than at present exists. This is not the only case in which, as a result of wartime flat rate advances, wages have got out of adjustment with skill and responsibility; and the problem is particularly difficult to tackle at a time when there are unanswerable reasons for not increasing the total wages bill except in connection with a rise in real productivity that will more than meet the cost.

PARLIAMENT: Advice to the Press

Wednesday

LAST week's debate on the Press divided itself, in a general way, between those who thought the Press could be better than it is and those who thought it no better than it should be. Only a few speakers regarded it as flawless. But the tendency to pass a collective judgment on its standards led to a familiar muddle. Who, thinking of C. P. Scott and his tradition, could resist the argument that a Press Council would be superfluous? And who, thinking of the inverted pornography of the Sunday Press could fail to support the case for a Council?

Herbert Morrison, opening for the Government, soon established that the Royal Commission hadn't given the popular Press a completely clean bill of health, despite the exultant though premature relief of the proprietors. He wanted newspaper men themselves, through a voluntary Council, to look after the well-being of the Press. By implication, he answered in advance the complaint of several Tory speakers that journalists seem the only people to attack their own profession. Since the Press has become commercialised, and the editor-proprietor has given way to the hired editor and the non-journalist proprietor, the working journalist has correspondingly lost the power to determine the standards of his profession. A Press Council would restore to him that forfeited right.

Oliver Stanley, in reply, preferred to concentrate on the counts under which the Press had been acquitted. If the Press is sometimes revolting, the fault, he thought, lies in part with the public. Or, in other words, if the newspaper proprietors sell the public what the public wants, who can blame them for not jeopardising the security of their investments by selling the public what's good for it? Stanley was not opposed to a Press Council set up by the newspaper industry itself.

After this listless beginning, the debate was little more than an unenthusiastic repetition of previous debates on the Press. Baxter interpolated among his amiable anecdotes—he can rarely say a harsh word to an opponent's face—the charge that Michael Foot had hushed up in *Tribune* the attendance of a Labour Minister at a lavish party—"a Babylon orgy" as he called it—though it had mentioned the presence of leading Tories. (The Minister stood behind the Speaker's Chair with the retiring manner of one who makes whoopee by stealth and blushes to find it fame.)

Foot, in his best flesh-tearing manner, ripped Baxter's case into shreds by saying that the Minister's name was being published in *Tribune* that very day. So eloquent and furious was his attack that Winterton could not refrain from calling him a genius. (Winterton himself, we now know, is a journalist of no small distinction; indeed his obituary notices in the *Sunday Times* have won the admiration of some necrologists.) But his description of how he stood himself a champagne dinner when Foot paid him a compliment in the *Daily Herald* was more warmly received than his emphatic *non sequitur* that as a result of the Report "the critics of the Press . . . have had a crushing defeat."

From the Tory benches. the best speech came from Sir Stanley Reed. A journalist with over fifty years' experience and with no special interest to please the Press Lords, he was able to challenge the newspapers for wearing "the white waistcoats of blameless lives" when the Commission had reproved them in particular with failing to supply the electorate with adequate material for sound political judgment. Sir Stanley can afford to be an independent Tory and seek to raise the standards of the Tory Press. He isn't standing at the next election.

Will Parliament now leave the Press to its own devices? Or will it impose a Statutory Council in the absence of a voluntary one? Despite the apathy of this debate, there is no reason to believe that professional journalists will not seek to achieve in one form or another the Commission's main recommendation. In the struggle to defend the great 19th-century standards of journalism which a modern commercialism has assaulted, the Commission's Report, as Foot said, is not the end. It's a beginning.

MAURICE EDELMAN

CANDID FRIEND

IN times past, the *Economist* established a reputation as a genuinely independent paper ready to expose dishonesty and support political integrity wherever they were to be found. In the early days after the 1945 election, it played the role of candid friend to the Labour Government. But gradually it has transferred its attentions to the Opposition; and recently it has supported —or is the correct word "provided"?—the arguments of Mr. Eccles in favour of a deflationary policy. The *Economist* has had the courage to admit that such a policy involves cutting the food subsidies and permitting a moderate dose of unemployment; and it has not spared abuse of Labour politicians for rejecting its advice.

In view of all this it was interesting to observe the *Economist's* assessment of Tory policy as expounded in *The Right Road for Britain*. This statement coupled a forthright pledge to reduce taxation with a number of precise promises to increase Government expenditure on social services and Service pay. It therefore contradicts the whole case of Mr. Eccles against Socialist extravagance and offends against the *Economist's* own standard of statesmanship far more flagrantly than the Labour Party programme, which has bluntly stated that no increases of social services are possible without increased productivity.

Faced by this unexpected blow, Mr. Churchill's candid friend has been afflicted with schizophrenia. In a remarkable article, entitled "The Tory Alternative" it begins by vieing with Mr. Baldwin in "appalling frankness," arguing that a political manifesto can only be judged on the "basic premise . . . that it should be designed to catch votes." Having briefly indicated the impossibility of fulfilling Lord Woolton's election pledges, this section of the article observes that "if a Conservative Government wished to secure a large reduction in expenditure and taxation, it could find plenty in this Report in justification of its action."

It is noteworthy that when the *Economist* discussed *Labour Believes in Britain*, it took a very different view of the exigencies of the hustings. The Labour Party, it advised, would be poor politicians if they acted as though the grave difficulties which face the country "did not exist—at least until after the election." It was both the duty of Mr. Attlee and tactically expedient for him to state the stark truth and to realise that "Sir Stafford Cripps' logical realism is far and away the best asset the Party has." This view is in remarkable contrast with the judgment that Tory vote-catching is legitimate because the Party "does not think it safe to say in public what it says in private."

The difference, of course, is an unconscious, but none the less sincere, tribute to the Labour Party, which told the truth in 1945 about its plans for Britain—and won. By telling the truth about its plans for its second term of office, it will, as the *Economist* rightly observes, have the best chance of winning back the floating vote. But the Tory Party is faced with a more difficult problem, because if it revealed its real plans, it would stand no chance with the electorate. Dishonesty, therefore, is for it a political necessity.

"But is it?"—chimes in the second voice of the candid friend. "Is vote-catching really necessary? Is it so certain that courage would not pay?" In the second half of this remarkable disclosure of an editorial mind divided against itself, every justification of electoral dishonesty so courageously put forward in previous paragraphs is equally courageously annihilated.

There are times when contradictions are more illuminating than dull consistency. Speaking in these two conflicting voices the candid friend has revealed the agonising dilemma which confronts the conscientious opponent of the Government. To lie or not to lie . . . ? To trick your way to power or to trust the people to accept the necessity for unemployment and higher profits as incentives to increased output. No wonder the *Economist* suffers from schizophrenia and resolves it by editorialising in opposite directions.

Of one thing we can be sure. Mr. Churchill is not plagued by such delicate scruples of conscience. "Catch the voters and don't be choosy about the bait" is his robust motto, and he is unlikely to be grateful to a candid friend who tremulously discusses the ethics of lying, the day after the lie has been told.

THE ATOM AND THE TRUST

THE three years which most experts conceded as the U.S. leasehold on the atom-monopoly have expired, and today it is lamentably true that a One World, supra-national Atomic Development Authority is farther away than it seemed when the first U.N. Assembly met in London in January, 1946. The one move towards atomic "internationalism" is Mr. Truman's present proposal that the U.S. should have "exploratory talks" with Canada and the United Kingdom.

Britain and Canada, with certain war-time insight but with no subsequent help from America, are both in a position now to make atomic bombs if they choose. France, which has disavowed all intention of producing bombs, is experimentally and technicologically well advanced. How near Russia is to producing a bomb is anybody's guess, but it is almost certain that she has not yet exploded one experimentally because the radio-activity patrols in the stratosphere would have detected the drift of atomic by-products. That is no more than a temporary reassurance.

So, in national isolation, other countries are finding the answers which American Security has tried so jealously to protect. These answers, as the Americans uneasily realise, may not be the same in each case. There is always a possibility that the American stock-pile may, like Goering's Luftwaffe, be out-measured by new models made by countries which had the advantage of starting late. An American atomic energy authority has recently admitted that the Canadian heavy-water pile, for producing plutonium, has characteristics in advance of U.S. installation. And the Americans may have reason to suspect that Britain has a useful "know-how" which it is keeping to itself.

To recapitulate. On Roosevelt's suggestion to Churchill in October, 1941, that "efforts should be jointly conducted", Britain transferred its atomic man-power and its extensive and expensive developments to the U.S. Trans-atlantic exchange of ideas then ended. Britain by 1940 proved the feasibility of the bomb and had convinced the Americans. Under the Roosevelt and Churchill agreement, key-scientists, including Joliot-Curie's French team which had escaped from France, were transferred to the Western Hemisphere to work on the project. Chadwick and others were active on the mechanics of the bomb at Los Alamos but non-Americans were completely excluded from the plutonium

project. So much so that when, in conjunction with the Canadians, we set up a centre of our own in Canada to work with the plutonium programme in Chicago, we gave everything in the way of information and got nothing of technological importance in return.

On February 27, 1943, Churchill cabled Mr. Harry Hopkins: "My whole understanding was that everything was on the basis of fully sharing the results as equal partners. I have no record but I shall be much surprised if the President's recollection does not square with this." He later threatened that if pooling of information were not resumed, Britain would be compelled to go ahead separately. The project had then passed from the research phase to design and manufacture, and from the civilian scientists to the U.S. War Department, and all that Hopkins could say that there was "nothing new or unusual" in this policy of restriction. To step beyond it would mean giving secret military information to individuals who wanted it "because of its application to non-war or post-war matters." As Hopkins' biographer, Robert E. Sherwood, points out in *The White House Papers*—"It gave the United States exclusive possession of all the fruits of joint research, including the possible use of atomic energy for industrial purposes after the war."

At the end of the war, British and Canadian scientists had to "start from scratch." Their activities were limited by a general security agreement with the U.S.A. under which, over whole sectors of atomic knowledge, they were barred from disclosing any information. But that did not mean that barred information was mutually exchanged. Design, construction of piles, metallurgical research, chemical separation of plutonium from uranium—all had to be worked out and elaborated. It was expensive—but not unproductive—ignorance since, in the long haul, British scientists acquired the "know-how" *plus* a lot of original discoveries and alternative methods. There has never been any mystery about the mechanics of the bomb; the "secrets" lay in the intermediate processes. They are no longer secrets. Moreover, now that Britain and Canada are "in the business," they are also in competition with the U.S.A. for the Congo and Bear Lake supplies of uranium. As Sir John Cockcroft, Director of the Government Research Station, has publicly announced, the refineries at Springfield, Lancs., can now cope with all U.K. requirements of the metal.

That is the background to the secret, but much-publicised, Washington discussions to which Mr. Truman summoned Dean Acheson, Eisenhower, Lilienthal and the Senate Atomic Committee. The meeting was not prompted by any fresh demands from Britain but there is no doubt that the immediate question was whether we and the Canadians should be given information, withheld since 1942, in exchange for what we have learned in the meantime and for trading any future developments on this side of the Atlantic.

To that extent, the issues are still confined to the tripartite "Sacred Trust", but the meetings have stimulated discussions of wider import—whether there should be an Atlantic Atomic Energy Pact, or whether it is possible to have an Atomic Development Authority, on the lines of the Baruch Plan but, by default, excluding the Soviet Bloc.

On the argument of "putting teeth" into the Atlantic Pact, a case could be made out for extending facilities to the other Atlantic Nations. After all, Norway has the means of producing heavy-water; Belgium has the Congo uranium and France has an atomic pile in operation. But it is a safe wager that French participation will never get past the Senate "Red" hunters since Joliot-Curie and many of his scientific associates are Communists and, what is more, *they* are the French atomic project. And immediately wider implications arise. What about the Commonwealth? Australia is the Commonwealth base for desert trials of rocket, and presumably, atomic weapons. India has large deposits of monazite sand, the richest source of thorium, which can be converted into Uranium 233, the alternative to Uranium 235 and plutonium, as the bomb-charge. Sir John Cockcroft is going to South Africa for atomic discussions. Uranium is to be found there in the waste of the goldmines.

That widens the issue into the question of a supra-national Atomic Development Authority for all nations outside the Soviet Bloc. Even if it were desirable irrevocably to accept the Two-World atomic solution, it is unlikely that, in present circumstances, America would agree to abdicate in favour of such an authority. There is a simple test: the strategic essentials of the Lilienthal Plan, later politicised as the Baruch Plan, included regional "international zones," where plants would be erected for the production of "dangerous" or "hot" materials, i.e. plutonium or U.235 or U.233. Would the U.S. Senate agree to such an international zone in, for instance, India? The answer is obviously "No."

That brings us back to some arrangement restricted to the Atlantic Powers, or to Britain and Canada. Is the British Government prepared to accept the implications?

On the present American premise, the considerations are military. As the country with the military potential, there can be no question in American minds as to where the "production zone" should be. It would be in the existing plants in the U.S.A. and it could not be "international" even in name; American security would demand the unambiguous "loyalties" and the restrictions which Churchill resented during the war. Even assuming that we continued to produce "dangerous materials," they would, as an obvious military precaution, be shipped to the Western Hemisphere for safety. Bombs, ditto. So that the stock-pile would reside where it is and Britain be merely a forward base.

The justification for what we have done, and ought to go on doing, in atomic research and development is that we must, if we are to maintain any future as an industrial nation, be abreast and ahead in the industrial applications of atomic energy. But the material which forms the bomb-charge is (even though it is made "safe") the same as that which forms the fuel for atomic-engines. If, under military sanction, what we produce is removed for safety or for bomb-making, we cannot develop atomic energy plants here. The U.S. is already preparing three new "nuclear reactors"—industrial power plants. It behoves us to do the same or better. We might, of course, get our "ration" for such purposes, under the terms of an Anglo-U.S.-Canadian pact, but it would be determined by the "Senior Partner"; and, as Lilienthal knows to his cost, there are powerful factions in America who distrust atomic energy as a competitor with existing power sources, hydro-electricity, oil and coal fuel. Baruch Aid might be much more embarrassing than Marshall Aid, in determining the future of our economy.

In considering any Pact or any Atomic Development Authority, less than the supra-national One World one envisaged by the Lilienthal Plan, we must always remember that the atomic stakes are not only military but economic.

RITCHIE CALDER

A LONDON DIARY

THIS London Diary may seem a little out-of-date. While Critic has gone abroad, I have been travelling in time. I spent my week in the London of three centuries ago, and found it at least as exciting as our own. Thanks to the Thomason collection in the British Museum, with its 22,000 tracts gathered between 1640 and 1660, the little England of five million people came alive with all the babel of its conflicting voices. What drama there is in these calf-bound volumes! Levellers with their lives at stake argue with the Grandees of the Army; Cavaliers sing elegies for their murdered king, while the divines with a parade of Greek and Hebrew texts argue for toleration and against it. One lives through the fears and hopes of London's citizens, as they read the weekly newspapers that poured in a spate from the presses during the second Civil War. Whom were they to believe? Week after week, the unlicensed Royalist "news-books" assured them that Cromwell had been killed at the siege of Pembroke; one even printed his last Will and Testament, dictated from his death bed. And then came his characteristic despatch reporting his staggering victory at Preston. When one tires of sermons and tracts, there is much else of interest. A pamphlet, which describes the riches of Virginia, advises "people of all degrees, from the highest master to the meanest servant, how suddenly to raise their fortunes." A petition on behalf of the Jews proposes that this persecuted people shall be carried in English and Dutch ships to Palestine. On the other side, the former Bishop of Rochester argues that their dispersion was a just punishment for their murder of the Son of God. And then, as one turns the pages, one comes on the first English version of "the Alkoran of Mahomet," translated from the French. But republican England was still a Christian land; the printer was taken into custody and his press seized.

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The Royalist newspapers, printed "underground" while the Parliament's "beagles" hunted their "authors," are decidedly livelier than their licensed rivals, salted as they are with malice and scandal. Evidently they were in great demand, for they sold for 2d. while the Parliamentary "news-books" fetched only 1d.—at a time when a good dinner in a tavern cost 3d. Women sold these "mercuries," though they risked a whipping if they were caught. The Cavaliers had their common stock of jokes. Every issue jeered at Cromwell's red nose ("Oh! ever refulgent nose") at "Black Tom's" (Fairfax') gout, and at Henry Marten's defiance of Puritan morals—"a legislative Priapus" was their best phrase for him. The Levellers were accused of a design to nationalise women. "The Saints rampant" aim at "community in all things, their wives not excepted." One of them specialised in astrology, but all his predictions went wrong; the stars did not save the King's head, nor was Lilly's warning justified that Cromwell would be killed in Ireland. The speciality of all the Cavalier "mercuries" was that they started with four stanzas of verse, which set the tone for the week. Most of it is poor stuff, but there are some exceptions. One of them reports the landing of Prince Charles in Kent, which never happened:

> Sweet gales of wind will fan the curled main
> To bring our Prince into this isle again.

Another of them laments in the last week of 1648 over the desecration of St. Paul's, where Cromwell's troopers stabled their horses and

made bonfires of the woodwork to keep themselves warm:

> . . . Thy arched roof
> Is lined with smoke and soot; the horse's hoof
> Beats on thy holy pavements; and we weep
> To think, where men should watch and pray, they sleep.

But the free press, Royalist and Leveller alike, was stamped out finally, when Cromwell consolidated his dictatorship in '49 and '50.

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The most sympathetic of these "news-books" is, to my thinking, the Leveller organ, *The Moderate*, the first progressive weekly published in this island. It started in June, 1648, and was suppressed in September, 1649. Its "author" was Gilbert Mabbott, a cobbler's son from Nottingham, who had educated himself. In one of his more ambitious leaders he quotes Aristotle (in English); he was steeped in history, English, French and Roman. He summarises, with journalistic brevity, the revolutionary doctrines which Lilburne, Walwyn and Overton were stating in their pamphlets. He was experimenting, as he went on, in the technique of his craft, but he was sadly cramped for space. Into 8 quarto pages of small print, equal to as many columns of the *N.S. & N.*, he had to pack the military and parliamentary news and find room for the lengthy Leveller manifestoes. His paper evidently throve, for latterly he expanded it to 12 pages and included a good deal of European news. There were no reviews, but he drew attention briefly to important new books. When he had space to let himself go, he could write a brilliant, ironical leading article. He was equally fearless in assailing first the "treachery" of the Long Parliament and, after the end of the Monarchy, the "tyranny" of the Army's "Grandees." He could vary his grave arguments with dramatic interludes. Into one of his best leaders he introduced a telling imaginary conversation between two of the army's prisoners, the timid Duke of Hamilton and the dare-devil Goring; each speaks in character. This cobbler's son was bent on ending the age of feudalism for ever. For him Naseby and Preston had blotted out the Norman Conquest. But after the suppression of the Levellers, he lost his fighting spirit and accepted a job as censor under the omnipotent Army.

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The priceless things in these old books are the documents in which the common man has his say. He became articulate in the Army, and occasionally he could write rather better than the journalists. Here is the state of mind in which Colonel Pride's foot-men purged the Long Parliament. "This regiment," they wrote in December, '48 "hath had but one month's pay since May, having marched 1,300 miles this summer . . . Sir, we can die, but not endure to see our Mother England die before us." A bitter "relation" from the troopers of Scroop's Horse records the growing rift between the lower middle class and the new ruling caste. They had received no pay for 26 weeks. Many had lost their horses (which they had to provide) in battle, and owed £10 or £20 for a new mount. Wounded men had been forced to borrow money to pay a surgeon. As for the maimed, the widows and the orphans, all Parliament did for them was to tell the Church-wardens to make a collection. But if any M.P. reported a loss in the war of a few hundred pounds, the House would promptly compensate him with as many thousands. The prisoners of war were rarely vocal, but there is a set of deeply moving verses in which one of the Royalist captives from Colchester, imprisoned at Woodstock, thanked Captain Grimes his jailor, "the stout and just," for kind treatment, and prayed for release. There is mention of 300 Scottish prisoners who were sold to two merchants for the plantations overseas; they wrote no verses of thanks.

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Once in the man's world of republican London women found their voice. The Levellers were generous in their attitude to women, and encouraged them to play a part in their movement. Ten thousand of them, out of London's population of 400,000, signed a petition in April, 1649, on behalf of Lilburne and his fellow-prisoners in the Tower, and had the audacity to carry it to the House. "We have an equal share and interest with men in the Commonwealth" was its daring claim. The soldiers threw squibs among them. The Speaker sent them a message "to go home and look after their own business." A Member in the Lobby told them "to stay at home and wash their dishes" to which one of the women replied, "Sir, we have scarce any dishes left us to wash." This scene might have happened forty years ago.

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Shorthand was just coming into use and it became a favourite sport to take down the speeches of one's opponents "verbatim." A Royalist composed a rollicking sermon for the Rev. Hugh Peters, the Army's Chaplain. But the favourite butt, both for Royalists and Levellers, was the Earl of Pembroke. As a comely youth he was one of the favourites of James I, who poured offices and lands upon him. With £30,000 a year, he may have been the richest man in England. He knew all about horses and dogs, packed an oath into every other sentence and boasted of his ignorance in politics. Listen to his last speech in the doomed House of Lords:

> My Lords, damme, I mistake your titles. I may call you as well spades, down-diddles or anything. For down you must, that's flat, levelled, all fellows now. By God, 'tis but just with us if the Army would pull down our breeches and whip us. We have sat seven years to pull down the King (with a pox) and now we must be pulled down ourselves by a pocky General (Army, I should say) . . . Damme, our soldiers are now our Kings, dukes, lords, preachers, nay and cash-keepers too. 'Zblood, we are like to have a thorough Reformation indeed . . . I thank God I am neither soldier nor scholar, but an upright Commonwealth's man. 'Tis confessed I have been a Privy Councillor, but damme, I scorn to be an evil councillor, though I have unjustly given sentence in the star chamber . . . Evil be to them that evil think, and I thank God I can justify my innocence by my ignorance . . . Damme, you ought to submit when you cannot otherwise help it, and if you will still remain obstinate, then take what follows . . . Sirs, I am never tedious in my impressions, and therefore include my speech, and desire you seriously to consider of the scope and syrup of what I have said.

Mrs. Malaprop could hardly have bettered this oration.

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On April 23, 1649, a Parliamentary "news-book" reported that the keeper of one of the late King's parks in Sussex, while walking his rounds with a gun, "espied a stork, which he knew not to be so. The stork did not seem to shun him, but came up towards him, which made him think it was a devil. Presently, he shot and killed it, and thereupon saw four or five more. Since which unkind usage, they all fled and were never seen since. It is preserved and may be seen at Lewes in Sussex. 'Tis said in history that these birds never come but into republics, as in Holland. The same man killed an eagle in the same park two years since." So that is why we have no storks in England. One curses that keeper, but it is only fair to remember that we should have lost the storks in any event at the Restoration. H. N. BRAILSFORD

THE PLEASURE DOME

(A fragment, after Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

By Waterloo did Morrison
An aluminium dome decree,
Where Thames along the South Bank ran,
Embodied in the festive plan
Of many a Ministry.
And there for Britain's Festival
Would rise a stately concert hall,
With sinuous walks and shaven greensward smooth,
And fairy lights among the greenery,
The jovial cockshy and cultural booth,
And Fun Fairs flung as far as Battersea.

But O, that deep financial chasm extending
Beneath, like to a subterranean river!
A yawning gap, a precipice descending
To sunless depths, a gaping void unending,
And widening and deepening for ever,
A fathomless abyss, a cavern hollow
Which threatened gardens, dome and all to swallow,
A dismal gulf impossible to plumb,
Under the dome of aluminium!
But Ministries, once set in mazy motion,
Materialise the visionary plan—
When total debts are measureless to man
The cost's a drop in the unbounded ocean,
Though while the festive acres they prepare,
Prophetic voices wail "Beware! Beware!"

Pleasure gardens and pavilions
Will be mirrored in the wave;
Why economise on millions
When the crisis is so grave?
The dome is a miraculous device—
A sunny dome above the precipice!

Taxpayers with foreboding saw
The blueprint of the Minister
To whom the dome was due;
But all agreed with Morrison
The dome must rise by 'Fifty-one,
Before our Waterloo.
The Festival Centenary
Anticipates insolvency—
We shall not be in bankruptcy
Till Nineteen-fifty-two.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD.

The State of Sodom and Gomorrah was a teddy bear's picnic compared with the viciousness of the average parish life and their tribal customs, which, in some cases, are shockingly primitive.—Report in Exeter *Express and Echo*. (C. L. H. Rowe.)

National Dock Labour Board.—Appointment of Occupational Therapist.—Advert. in *Daily Telegraph*. (R. Dunkley.)

Transport House and *Daily Worker* in exciting draw.—Cricket report in *West London Press*. (S. Hearst.)

"There is a simple answer to the atomic bomb," says dapper, quiet-voiced Brigadier A. M. Toye, V.C., M.C. "It is that no weapon has ever been invented for which the answer doesn't exist."—*Illustrated*. (Andrew Pears.)

. . . AND HEAVEN TOO

THREE aged Anglo-Saxon spirits, strangely out-of-place in Italy, appear to preside over the present management of Italian society: the spirits of Manchester, Micawber, and Malthus (to these one should perhaps add Marshall, but he, after all, is really a contemporary). Manchester, of course, because of "private enterprise"; Micawber because of the something that is confidently expected to turn up year by year until European recovery, by some obscure but splendid process, creates itself out of chaos; and Malthus—most surprising of all—because the main principle of De Gasperi's economic policy appears to be that there is not now, nor can there ever be, enough wealth in Italy to nourish the Italians. So modern has the Vatican become, indeed, that the Pope now seems to stand in full agreement with the economic theories of the Reformation, and denounces as "materialist," heretical, and generally beyond redemption all those who say that Malthus was wrong because they believe the earth—and even Italy—can well support a rising rate of human survival. *Magna est veritas.*

The central point is that Italian capitalism, late in appearance and never really master of itself, has at no time succeeded in expanding its productive capacity at a rate which would give employment to, much less enrich, this ever-growing Italian population. Even under wartime autarchy, Fascist Italy suffered from chronic unemployment; the number of *registered* unemployed in 1939 was around 800,000. That the same figure should now stand at over two millions (with the better part of another million on short time) is partly a consequence of war and disaster. But not essentially: although the population has grown by nearly three millions since 1936, employment in industry has declined from four millions to 3.74 millions. Patently, things are getting worse. Never very lively, the system is fast running down.

This fact of running down was until lately semi-concealed by the great quantities of consumer goods delivered under the Marshall Plan. Nine-tenths of the goods delivered during the first year of Marshall Aid were for "relief"; and the second year is expected to show much the same proportion. So obvious, to-day, is the failure of Marshall Aid to stimulate any real measure of recovery (its political achievement in upholding De Gasperi and preventing social change is another matter) that Mr. Hoffman's headquarters have lately grown restive. Their *Country Report* for Italy issued earlier this year gave a thinly veiled scolding to Italian capitalists for shirking their responsibilities, and said that Italy needed "an aggressive policy of investment by the Italian Government." Even if there can never be enough industry to support all the Italians, the Report suggests, at least there should be more than there is at present. "It is essential to accelerate expansion of industrial capacity in Italy at a rate well above pre-war." Together with this, "emigration on a very substantial scale will be required in order to effect a major reduction in unemployment during the E.R.P. period"—although Mr. Hoffman modestly refrains from suggesting how this may be brought about.

Industrial expansion, manifestly enough, is not taking place except in one or two pockets of monopolist production. While agreeing that industrial activity as a whole was slowly rising to the far from satisfactory level of 1938, the Hoffman Report pointed out that "activity in the capital goods sectors of the economy is considerably lower in relation to pre-war." Use of existing capacity in the mechanical and engineering industries, it found, "probably does not exceed 50-55 per cent. to-day," while "the machine tool industry is operating at some 70 per cent. of capacity," and, even so, "producers' inventories have risen sharply."

Enquiries at the headquarters of the *Confindustria* (the Italian F.B.I.) in Rome—occupying as of old the splendid palace which stands across the square from Mussolini's balcony—revealed much pique at these American criticisms. What is to be done when the very apostles of "private enterprise" begin asking for "aggressive Government investment"? From other mouths the thing would smack of treason. For the Hoffman Report, when recommending Keynesian remedies, showed a fine indifference to the special structure of Italian industry and the policies which have governed its development. The small group of men who have controlled the greater part of Italian industry for the last few decades (and control it to-day) have never shown much evidence of understanding that their function was not only to get rich quick but also to help Italy towards a balanced economy which could properly employ the whole population. And these men are behaving to-day as they behaved yesterday.

During the crisis years of the late 'Twenties they were glad to have the help of the Fascist State in nationalising their losses, so that then and subsequently they handed over to the State an imposing share in heavy industry. These State industries, controlled to-day by a body known as I.R.I. (*Istituto di Ricostruzione Italiana*), were built up by Mussolini as the basis of his war industry. After 1945, naturally enough, they fell on evil times again. But instead of reorganising and reconverting them by "an aggressive policy of investment," the present Government (and here, of course, this means the monopolist interests) has preferred to allow their ruin to become gradually complete. Hence the low level of engineering activity. Just as before the war the masters of Italian industry preferred to invest abroad or in light industry at home where profits were higher and quicker, so to-day—Mr. Hoffman notwithstanding—they have again turned their back on heavy industry. Thus we find De Angeli-Frua of Milan investing in textiles, Piaggia of Genoa in sugar, and Fiat of Turin in touring cars (while the production of transport vehicles, acutely short in Italy, sinks rapidly; and the mechanical industries go bankrupt one after another). Significantly enough, the textiles industry is producing almost to capacity, while exports of many lines of consumer goods are encouragingly high.

Not content with their refusal to find adequate capital for the greater part of heavy industry and its branches (above all for those owned by the State), the dominant industrialists appear determined to eliminate any possible source of competition with their own products. Here the outstanding case is that of motor-cars, where Fiat has now secured a practical monopoly. Detailed survey of the more important industries in Milan, for instance, shows time after time the same dismal story of financial difficulties arising from relief which has regularly come "too little and too late." World-famous factories which are completely idle or are approaching financial paralysis include Caproni, Isotta-Fraschini, Breda, Safar, Alfa-Romeo, Motomeccanica, and others—of which only Alfa-Romeo and Motomeccanica are State-controlled. In many cases these works have remained in production only because their workers have steadfastly refused to abandon them.

There is plenty to show that the masters of the Italian economy have done nothing to change their ways. Their business lives revolve, to-day as in the past, round the ambition to make the largest profit in the shortest time. From their point of view, Italy is making a splendid recovery. One of them, a textile magnate called Brusadelli, was lately found to have an income about two thousand times greater than his income tax assessment. That these great profits are being made at the cost of continued national impoverishment, and progressively diminished chances of genuine recovery, seems to leave them unmoved. Neither the reigning industrialists nor their allies, the landowners of the South, appear to feel any need to take thought for the morrow. Isn't that, after all, the business of the Americans?

Turin, July. BASIL DAVIDSON

(To be concluded).

FINE SPORT WITH PRINCES STREET

EDINBURGH! What a city to live in—for the well-to-do and the skilled craftsman! What a town for a child to grow up in—rich or poor! Beautiful, savage, civilised, wrapt in a cloak of smoke and blood-stained history. All her children adore her. Most of us yearn to lay hands on her and scrub off her blemishes and dirt.

Sir Patrick Abercrombie has had fine sport with his town-plan for Edinburgh. In his Report, he writes:

> The rebuilding of Princes Street presents perhaps the biggest, certainly the most spectacular problem of civic design in Great Britain, surpassing in interest, because of its history and individualism, the South Bank of the Thames.

He has made, with the aid of the masses of material ready to hand, some fairly radical proposals. The material includes, in this Report, an historic account of the building of Edinburgh, by E. J. Macrae, written with love and learning; and many excellent illustrations and maps. It must also have helped Sir Patrick that all of the ideas he discusses, as well as many he omits, have been passionately canvassed by Edinburgh citizens for years—in a few cases for generations.

What are the elements of this city? A noble, hilly site, volcanically abrupt, dominated by the Castle and Arthur's Seat. An Old Town of the seventeenth century, Franco-Scottish Renaissance. A New Town of the eighteenth century, classical and planned. A Victorian mess of tenements, breweries, and railway-lines. An early twentieth-century mess of shops and hotels brawling along Princes Street. A between-the-wars mess of unplanned housing-estates spoiling—with one exception—lovely sites. (Yet who would begrudge the bungalow-dwellers their escape to air and roses from the Cowgate?) And, to cap all, the threat of the new Lothian coalfield.

The Abercrombie Plan is strong on the critical side, on things to obliterate. First of all, the railway-lines through Princes Street Gardens, the smoked-glass roofs of the Waverley Station, the slug-like bulk of the railway hotels. Sir Patrick wants to put one main station where it should always have been, with the lines connecting south of the Castle Ridge. But his proposal to keep a sunk electric tube running along the valley below the Castle for suburban use is unnecessary. The suburban inhabitants converge upon Princes Street; they do not go along it. (This is the sort of fact a stranger does not know.) The railway should go altogether from the gardens.

But the reclaiming of the glen between the Castle and Princes Street for gardens and parks is what many of us suggested as the national war memorial, long ago.

The traffic problem is very difficult, especially if Leith docks, reconditioned, handle much greater freight. But here Sir Patrick, hypnotised by the current commercial craze, or more likely, as I think, fascinated by a trick engineering project, has proposed solutions as bad as, if not worse than the Victorian errors. The problem is getting cars and lorries away to the South. (The West is easy, and demands only a new autobahn to Glasgow.) The plan rightly proposes a new artery set clear of the town to the east of Arthur's Seat. It does not say, what is essential, that building along it should be forbidden. But, quite incomprehensibly, the plan suggests a lorry road from Leith across the east end of Princes Street, bridging the valley with an immense concrete platitude, tunnelling the Castle Ridge, and thence paralleling the present main road in the narrow space to the west of Arthur's Seat.

This is planning for a slum, several miles long, through the heart of the city. Surely we have learned by now that lorry-roads must be squalid! Nobody can live beside them because sleep at night is impossible and children are in constant danger. Nobody wants to shop in their din and peril. They inevitably become sordid, bedraggled avenues of dubious buildings and semi-bankrupt shops. If Rennie, who was a great street engineer, were alive to-day, he would be the first to point out that a few more miles on an un-built-up by-pass would save running time, petrol, and the decency of city life.

The other main traffic proposal is to sink bus traffic to a roofed street below Princes Street, which would be collonaded on the sloping garden side. That is an excellent idea. But it is coupled with one which shows a complete failure of visual imagination. This is to build a third street, above the bus tunnel and ten feet below Princes Street, to serve as a "promenade and car-park."

Now the character of Princes Street, which has no counterpart in Britain, is that of the city meeting-place. It is a natural suntrap. All Edinburgh walks along it to shop, meet friends, and enjoy the view of which we never tire. The promenade is, of course, the pavement on the shop side. Dividing the walkers into two levels would ruin this happy sociability of Edinburgh people. But it would not happen; nobody would use the lower street as a promenade—unless, perhaps, it served as a place of assignation for prostitutes, for its semi-privacy would soon prove handy for this purpose. It would certainly be used as a car-park, a mile long, far more hideous and obtrusive than the railway which has disgraced the Gardens for a century. Nobody could look at the Castle, either from the street or from the windows of the houses, except across a serried vista of parked cars.

If the City Council adopts this road, just because motors are the present mode of transport, future generations will rise and call it accursed, as we call the Town Council which allowed the railways to deface the finest street-scheme in Europe. There is need for proper parking-places, but one less proper than Princes Street Gardens is inconceivable. If the heavy traffic were sunk to a tunnel road, and the lovely natural slope down from Princes Street preserved, this plan would indeed be a fine one.

There is a minor defect—the suggestion for a roundabout of the tunnel road under the Mound. The Mound is not rock, like the rest of Edinburgh's foundations. It is simply the medieval rubbish-dump, covered over. If traffic is run below it, the National Gallery will have to be moved; for Rembrandt's canvas will not stand the inevitable vibration. This would be wrong, for the galleries are good buildings and beautifully placed. The idea is an example of the obsession with motor traffic which mars the Report, and which is willing to sacrifice both human life and architectural beauty to the omnipotent bus.

The proposals to clear and rebuild round the Usher Hall, and to create a new Festival Centre at the east end of Princes Street are good and useful. It should be noted that the Festival Centre and the cross-city traffic artery are mutually exclusive, for the noise of the road would be fatal to the concert-halls. But the crux, of course, is the rebuilding of Princes Street.

This is the great adventure in civic design which excites Sir Patrick's mind. He envisages the present buildings torn down. And rightly: except for Adam's delightful Register House and the few remaining original eighteenth-century upper stories, the elevations are terrible, of a vulgarity ranging from the mean to the saccharine. Rightly, too, Sir Patrick insists on harmony, and controlled heights, if not on uniformity. But he strangely foresees much increased height as desirable. It isn't. The serenity and fineness of the New Town flows, above all, from the sense of street proportion common to that extraordinary galaxy of eighteenth-century Scottish builders; the streets are wide; the squares are large, the buildings are relatively low. Heighten them and immediately peace, privacy and dignity vanish. Look what happened in London to Regent Street and Berkeley Square! The fact is that high buildings are oppressive, and induce misery in the human mind. Sir Patrick argues that the large space of one-sided Princes Street obviates the objection to height. All it will do will be to overwhelm the Gardens and the Castle and to cast the Old Town out of scale. Besides, the upper stories of high buildings are useless and unused (think again of the bankrupt waste of much of Regent Street). If the City Council turns Princes Street into a row of sky-scrapers, it will lose masses of money on them—deservedly.

Sir Patrick is an architect himself, and he cannot quite say, but he does hint at the final problem. This is that there is no known architect to-day who is good enough to rebuild Princes Street. The English architects—except for those who have specialised in Council House schemes—have absolutely no street sense. Their minds are conditioned by the anarchy of individual sites, and they are capable of perpetrating horrors such as the debauching of Regent Street, Portland Place, St. James's Square, or the new Insurance Building in Bloomsbury, creating hideous and discordant groupings. I am dismayed by the sketches and models of the Abercrombie Plan, which are clumsy examples of the timid, non-functional, public lavatory style fashionable at the moment. Anybody who has lived or worked in a modern office block knows how ill-proportioned are the rooms, how inhumane the arrangements imposed by the monolith style. Fortunately, this plan expects to take fifty years for completion; and we must hope that, inspired by the chance of rebuilding Edinburgh, some young architect will shape a great vision to this opportunity and prove that the nation which produced a succession of building genius can yet bring forth one whom Adam would hail as his match in strength, grace, and originality.

FREDA WHITE

TESTAMENT OF A PREMATURE ANTI-BEVINIST

MANY locust-eaten years ago, while Hoare and Laval were busily digging a grave for premature anti-Fascism, I was talking to Maxim Litvinov in the Palais des Nations smoking-room when Zilliacus, then an official of the League, hurried past—a big dossier under his arm. "There goes a good chap," said Litvinov, "who will have need of his friends. He is the one man in Western Europe to-day who believes invincibly in the Covenant; and invincible believers are always crucified." So it has proved. Zilli was then a member of the British Labour Party; to-day he is an expelled "rebel," and his staunchest political friend, Arthur Henderson, lies in what must be an unquiet grave, with the Military Missions of the North Atlantic Pact tramping over his head. The League foundered; but Zilli's faith survived: he really did believe that, in terms of foreign policy, *Let Us Face the Future* meant what it said, and that he had converted the National Executive of the Labour Party to a Socialist conception of international relations based logically on the United Nations' Charter. His refusal to shrug his shoulders cynically at his error may have been, for the moment, his political undoing. But his friends are friends: his disinterested sincerity is something without which one would be immeasurably poorer.

It is not in my role to discuss here exhaustively the complex issues raised by Zilli's pamphlet, *Why I Was Expelled* (Collet's, 1s. 6d.). On the relatively minor question whether the N.E.C. was right or entitled to "purge" the Member for Gateshead there is little worth saying—at least by a non-party student of affairs. The pamphlet's documentation demolishes completely the "smear" charge that Zilli was ever a secretly disloyal "fellow-traveller," that he ever gave priority to the interests of the Soviet Union, or that he at any time regarded the British Communist Party as more than an "irrelevant nuisance" unless and until it were tragically proved that Social-Democracy in this country had broken down and counter-revolution must be met by force. Zilli's presence at the Paris Peace Congress (where, incidentally, he stoutly championed the democratic way of life) was a useful pretext for his expulsion; but the plain truth is that, as a vociferous and premature anti-Bevinist who, rightly or wrongly, saw World War III as the inevitable alternative to a positive peace policy, he was in advance of the Party's rank-and-file and he became an intolerable nuisance to the Front Bench. And that was that.

More important—but not, in the domestic political setting, essential—is the answer to the question: Is Zilli right? The line he consistently took, since 1945, is that, following faithfully the principles of the U.N. Charter, we should seek "equally close co-operation" with the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., and that, in Europe, we should recognise the fact that the effective leadership of the working class has passed, through the Resistance, into the hands of Communist parties, with whom we should "come to terms." He was charged by Morgan Phillips with thus advocating, at least implicitly, the fusion (and obliteration) of Socialist parties in the dogmatic Communist majority. He could, and does, retort that the futility of the anti-Communist policy of Blum, Saragat and Transport House is to be seen in the bargain-basement relics of French and Italian Social-Democracy. Indeed, his analysis of the historic degeneration of anti-Communism into

alliance with reaction is pitiless and unanswerable. At the elbows of Moch and Bevin the ghosts of Noske and Scheidemann stand as hideous remembrancers.

But this does not wholly dispose of the issue. If Zilli has been right in demanding that the British Government should "act as Socialists in Europe," it is not sufficient negatively to object to being dragged by General Bradley into another war to "extirpate Communism." If one shares Zilli's faith in democracy, one must also discern, as he does, in the Communist Third of the World, "a sense of ultimate common purpose," and trust that "the traditions of European liberalism and democracy and the political maturity of the peoples of Europe, as contrasted with Russia [can succeed in] gradually transforming Communism from within"—towards a more tolerant society.

It may be that Zilli is right. It may be that G.B.S. is right when he says, in his letter of support for Zilli, that Stalin is "the mainstay of peace in Europe." It may be that if a Social-Democratic Britain in 1945 had firmly reversed the Churchillian anti-Bolshevik balance of power policy and made common cause, in defiance of the U.S., with the revolutionary Socialist "democracies" of Europe, we should not to-day be having Atlantic Pact "Exercises." It may be that Zilli (not to speak of G.B.S.) under-rates the dialectical obstacles in the road of Anglo-Russian co-operation, and ignores the difficulties of severing the British tie with Washington once the fatally attractive U.S. Credit of 1946 had been accepted. All that I can say is that the Zilliacus policy was never tried out; and the results of the alternative are not particularly pleasing.

But all this is beside the way. Readers of this journal can get *Why I Was Expelled* and make up their own minds on the big, debatable issue. All that I am concerned to do is to voice, for the little it is worth, the conviction of my own that, right or wrong, Zilli should continue to express in Parliament an attitude which is not merely adult and intelligible, but fortified by a lifetime's intimate study of foreign affairs. He will have against him at Gateshead the mobilised opposition of the Catholic Church and the vitriolic enmity of the (*ci-devant* Leftist) President of the Durham Miners. If he is beaten, it will be a defeat for something that is most worth-while in internationally minded British Socialism.

AYLMER VALLANCE

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC AND STATE AID

ONCE or twice lately Mr. Ernest Newman has written in his most derisive vein about the expenditure of public money on music-making, the main target of his attacks being the Arts Council; he has also quoted with relish some still more fiery observations on the same topic made by Sir Thomas Beecham at a banquet. We all love to see these two splendidly pugnacious elders flaying their opponents; England will be a duller place when they settle down. But it would be a pity if their joint prestige, together with the undeniable element of truth contained in their jeremiads, should lead the uninstructed reader (not to mention the uninstructed legislator) to swallow their more sweeping assertions whole. Let us glance at one or two of these assertions and try to discover on what evidence they are based, and to what practical results, if generally accepted, they would be likely to lead.

Orchestral music, especially our London orchestral music, is in an unhealthy state: so far there will be wide agreement with Sir Thomas and Mr. Newman. Let me quote the latter's analysis of the situation (*Sunday Times*, May 8, 1949):

> Everywhere among really musical people one hears the same complaints—too much music-making, hackneyed programmes (even the orchestral players tell us in private that they are sick to death of performing certain works), a low standard of performance in general, and the too great dependence of it all for its existence on a feckless use of the taxpayer's money.

Apart from the controversial final clause, no sensible musician would deny the truth of this picture. What then is the proper solution? According to Mr. Newman (*Sunday Times*, June 26), it is simplicity itself.

> Without State subsidies this excess of supply over demand would soon right itself in the traditional economic way; yet we still go on paying the subsidies.

The treatment sounds beautifully straightforward: deprive all orchestras (including, I presume, such invaluable smaller bodies as the Boyd Neel Orchestra) of financial backing, even on the most modest scale, and the survivor (always supposing that there is a survivor) will then be free to perform unhackneyed and well-rehearsed programmes to full houses, and so keep itself afloat "in the traditional economic way."

But facts are more inconvenient than theories; and it is a particularly awkward fact that nowadays a series of properly rehearsed symphony concerts, employing a large orchestra on a full-time basis, cannot expect to pay its way; the more adventurous the programmes and the higher the standard of performance, the more hopeless is the attempt to make ends meet. Consider the case of the Hallé. This great orchestra has the field virtually to itself in the Manchester district; it usually draws full houses there; and it is also much in demand all over the North of England. In theory, therefore, it satisfies Mr. Newman's prescription and ought, one feels, to be a splendid example of supply balancing demand "in the traditional economic way." Alas for theory! A loss of over £18,000 on last year's Hallé season has had to be met by various guarantees and grants, including £9,000 from the Manchester Corporation and another £9,000 from the Arts Council. If the orchestra's strength were to be increased, as was intended, to 100 players, then the Hallé Society estimates that there will be an annual deficit of approximately £52,000. I see no reason to suppose that these leading Manchester citizens are incompetent spendthrifts. What then ought to happen to the Hallé, with its magnificent unbroken traditions—this orchestra on whose recent performances Mr. Newman himself has lavished the highest praise in his vocabulary? Would he be content to see it vanish altogether, or dwindle to the scale of a pier-head band?

Though London is a bigger city than Manchester, I doubt whether a solitary London orchestra, operating without competition, would fare very much better than the Hallé does now. What permanent orchestra of the front rank in any country is entirely independent of subsidy or guarantee? The support may come from the State, or from a municipality, or from a group of public-spirited and wealthy individuals; but come it must from somewhere. Sir Thomas's own orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic, held up to our admiration as being "free from the taint of sponging on the taxpayer," is not a permanent organisation like the Hallé or the L.P.O.; and though it receives no public money direct, some of its most important engagements are provided by publicly assisted bodies such as the Royal Philharmonic Society, Glyndebourne and the Edinburgh Festival. That it gives some of the best performances in England is due to the genius of its founder-conductor; if he were to retire tomorrow, how long would the R.P.O. survive?

If our London concert life were run, as Mr. Newman thinks it ought to be, on rigidly commercial lines, what sort of programmes should we get? Apart from the unique Proms, the only large orchestral concerts that make money are those which consist of popular favourites thrown on to the platform with one rehearsal and a star soloist: in fact, the sort of concert promoted by the many mushroom agencies which have sprung up to exploit the indiscriminate post-war enthusiasm for orchestral music. When the wicked "subsidised" L.P.O. puts on, as it often does, a series of fresh and original programmes, the Albert Hall is empty. Sir Thomas himself, who loves to play unfamiliar music, was forced during last season to cancel an adventurous programme because only a few hundred persons had bought seats for it; and recent R.P.O. programmes seem to have become less and less enterprising. If all hope of financial assistance were withdrawn, concert promoters would feel increasingly obliged to play for safety. Apathy can offer, at the moment, a valid excuse: the more intelligent the public, the more it resents the acoustic deficiencies of the Albert Hall. Mr. Newman does not mention our concert hall problem; and yet any discussion of supply and demand in London orchestral music which ignores the lack of a tolerable hall must be largely waste of time. We shall know more about the whole subject when we get (not, by the way, without the expenditure of public money) our new Queen's Hall and our new South Bank hall—always provided that they prove to be acoustically successful.

Phrases like "lavish charity" and "pouring public money down the drain," which always crop up in these discussions, are misleading. They conceal the fact that the total amount spent on all the arts in this country represents a fraction of a farthing in each pound expended; and they disregard the far more generous treatment of music elsewhere; most large Continental opera houses, for example, receive a good deal more than Covent Garden. People who use such phrases are right in insisting that the money must be well spent; but what they usually mean is that it ought not to be spent at all. They shut their eyes to the evident fact that the days of private patronage and large private incomes (such as enabled Sir Thomas to do his wonderful work as a young man) are now almost over, and that in consequence public music-making, if it is to survive at all, must be partly financed, like our public museums and galleries, out of public funds. Our rulers and the bulk of enlightened opinion accept this view; the great difficulty is that of method. In art, as in politics, England occupies a half-way house between private enterprise and full socialism. We shrink from establishing a Ministry of Fine Arts with dictatorial powers, which could impose programmes from above, and say to this orchestra "Be!" and to that orchestra "Be not!" Instead, we have the Arts Council, a typically British compromise, which does not initiate, but is prepared to help existing organisations, provided that they are planned on a permanent basis and can show a valuable artistic record. No doubt this policy, like most compromise policies, leads sometimes to anomalous results; no doubt the money dispensed by the Arts Council is sometimes

wisely spent, and sometimes (as often at Covent Garden) foolishly; by all means let us have an enquiry into any allegations of muddle and incompetence which can be made. But it is a delusion that nothing stands in the way of a perfectly healthy musical life except a group of feckless dippers into the public purse. Without financial support, orchestral music and opera would peter out in a long *decrescendo* of routine Puccini and Tchaikovsky; the great problem is how to combine the necessary official backing with as much independence as possible for composer and performer. The Arts Council is an attempt, perhaps a clumsy attempt, to achieve this; we should all be glad to hear of a better way of tackling the problem. In one form and another, it is the central social problem of our time, and it cannot be solved by a few strokes from a bantering pen or by even the wittiest after-luncheon speeches.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

SO THEY SAY . . .

As Sir David Maxwell Fyfe observed during the Commons debate on the Press Report last week, "There must be suppression by compression at the moment." Compulsion notwithstanding, it is instructive to compare *Hansard's* 56-page account of the six-hour debate with the truncated versions in next day's newspapers.

There were 14 speakers. Only *The Times* reported them all; the *Daily Graphic* quoted from only four. (The speeches the *Graphic* ignored included Michael Foot's, in which he paid the following tribute to Lord Kemsley: "Who . . . would have imagined that Lord Kemsley would come forward with such a full and open confession? . . . Not merely did he confirm the charges of distortion which we had made against his newspapers, but he gave vital facts about the concentration of ownership. . . .")

Of the "populars," only the *Daily Graphic* and the *Daily Express* quoted Mr. Morrison's remark: "I almost thought we ought to have another Royal Commission to look into the way the Commission Report had been mishandled by some of the newspapers"—and the *Express* added that it had been said in a "jocular way." The *Express* then went on:

> Mr. Haydn Davies . . . quoted Mr. John Gordon, editor of the *Sunday Express*, as saying in a message to his staff: "Whenever we see a story in a newspaper concerning something we know about it is more often wrong than right." Mr. Baxter, a former editor of the *Daily Express*, intervened: "I agree with every word of that. A newspaper has to deal with 300 subjects a night. They cannot be expert in everything. In comes a story and J. S. Smith appears as J. G. Smith. . . ."

The only trouble with the *Express's* justification was that in *Hansard* it read: ". . . somebody named J. S. Smith appears as W. S. Smith."

The *Daily Mail*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Herald* and *Daily Mirror* delicately omitted Mr. Morrison's quotation from Stanley Baldwin's speech in 1931: "What the proprietorship of [the newspapers conducted by Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook] is aiming at is power, and power without responsibility—the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages."

The *Daily Mirror* was the only paper to omit Chuter Ede's story of how, five minutes after he had arrived home last year upon hearing of the death of his wife, a "representative of a popular newspaper" called for a statement.

The *News Chronicle* stated editorially that the debate "added little of value to the public discussion that had already taken place." Perhaps that was the reason for the inadequacy of its Parliamentary courage. It reported Mr. Morrison's 7,000-word speech in less than 100 words, and omitted altogether Sir David Maxwell Fyfe's winding-up for the Opposition. The recognised journalists' contributions were either left out (Mr. Tom Driberg's) or reduced to one sentence (J. P. W. Mallalieu's, 9 words out of 3,000; Michael Foot's, 20 words out of 4,000).

Department of Understatement

Daily Mirror, July 30:

> The *Daily Mirror* is a sensational newspaper. . . . Sensationalism . . . means the vivid and dramatic presentation of events so as to give them a forceful impact on the mind of the reader. . . . No doubt we make mistakes, but at least we are alive.—Silvester Bolam.

AUTOLYCUS

LETTERS FROM TWO ISLANDS

Isle of Britain.

. . . I live by the Pen but do not know how to use one properly. I was reminded of this humiliating fact this morning, when I found myself signing my name about three hundred times for the limited edition of a new book called *Delight*, which, being a personal sort of book, seemed to me to ask for a revival for the pleasant pre-war custom of publishing occasional limited signed editions. The truth is, that I never use a pen except to scrawl a signature—not good enough for a limited edition—on letters and cheques. I began typing before 1914 and for thirty years now I have done all my work on typewriters. Some people wonder at this, forgetting that it is all a matter of use and habit, and that both pens and typewriters are simply writing instruments. The pen is more personal but that can be a disadvantage when the impersonality of print is what is ultimately aimed at, a typescript coming nearer to the final form of the work. But what about the noise of the typewriter? I soften this to some extent by always working with cottonwool stuffed in my ears. I have tried noiseless machines but they put me off: it is like typing on a steak-and-kidney pudding.

But every time I have to use a pen for any longer than five minutes, I marvel again at the industry of many of the old writers. Thus we are told that Scott wrote *Guy Mannering* in two or three weeks. As a feat of invention and narration this is good going, but it does not astonish me. What does is the sheer magnitude of the task of putting all those words down on paper with a pen. Somebody described how he saw, through a lighted window, Scott's hand moving regularly across the foolscap, hour after hour. Terrifying!

And what an odd business it is, writing one's name several hundred times! I began to ask myself who this fellow was. As in moments of great danger, when it seems as if an immortal spectator takes over, the normal self, labelled with that queer name, thinned out and dissolved like morning mist; its place being taken by an unnamed and impersonal intelligence, in whose service, for whose profound desire to experience, I suspect, we men and women exist. We are told this is an illusion. (In moments of great danger, they tell us, a defence mechanism operates to create a temporary feeling of detachment.) But in those fields of speculation where nothing can be proved and we are merely presented with a choice of guesses, I (whoever that is) prefer the grand heartening illusion (as it seems to me) to the narrow depressing one. There is nothing about me—John Boynton Priestley, born Bradford, 13th September, 1894—that deserves immortality or any vast cosmic arrangements for reward and punishment, Further Education on this planet or any other—and nobody can persuade me that there is, because obviously the scale is all wrong. But on the other hand I feel certain there is a Somebody or a Something that lives through me, as through all persons (and only persons, not States, Standard Oil Companies, organisations, machines), and that this Somebody or Something, gathering experience for some fireside beyond the furthest galaxies, is indestructible and immortal. And when for a flash, our life is its life, the result is ecstasy. But do I imagine that these are profound reflections? My friend, I do not.

Do not believe that we spend all our time here crawling through a labyrinth, holding red tape. A man I know who is a medical research worker told me, the other day, of an infantile paralysis patient who had been discharged after having had new muscles grafted on and so forth. Within a month, this man had been fixed up with a job he could do, his own special transport, and a prefabricated house designed to suit his requirements, with no steps and specially wide doors for his wheeled chair. We can do it when we really want to do it. Perhaps we all ought to pretend that we are suffering from infantile paralysis—as indeed, in one sense, we are—and then concentrate upon speed and flexibility. Most of us are agreed that we must move faster and be far more flexible, without returning to the wasteful and cut-throat world of capitalist enterprise. After all, I have no doubt there was more speed and flexibility aboard a pirate ship than in one of George the Second's frigates.

Yes, we may be short of tobacco soon. We could save a great deal of tobacco by not selling cigarettes but allowing people to buy cigarette tobacco and papers; for my guess is that if people had to make their own cigarettes they would soon cut down their consumption of them. Nothing in this world demands so irresistibly to be taken as a cigarette. There is something about those neat white little cylinders that makes the fingers itch. So if people had to make their own, this tremendous temptation to take a cigarette would be removed. By the way, there is one of the minor ironies of history here. Years ago a Greek told me that when his countrymen tried to persuade our great tobacco combines to use more Greek tobacco, they were informed that Virginian leaf was vastly preferred because it was "more habit-forming." And now, having formed the habit, we are in despair over finding the dollars to pay for it. The old Ironist at work again.

Talking of dollars, I have been wryly amused for some time now by the way in which the true-blue Union-Jack-waving patriots hasten to accept American domination. The very people who ought, in theory, most deeply to resent any interference from outside in our affairs now seem to welcome it. The truth is, I suppose, that these politicians, magnates and editors of popular papers are all unconscious power-worshippers. They look reverently or admiringly towards power as the sunflower turns to the sun. I notice this in my own little line of business; for the very papers that cannot be persuaded to give their readers information about the London Theatre, from which they collect a substantial revenue in advertisements, do not hesitate to give us news of the New York Theatre; as if New York were now the capital city of an empire in which London is merely one of the

provincial cities. And such straws show how the wind is blowing.

But—alas !—what fantasies reach us from the other side ! Here is a paragraph from the Soviet weekly, *New Times* :

> In London journalistic circles it is said, however, that the scandalous performance of the Labour-appointed Royal Commission has a very simple explanation behind it. The bosses of the Conservative newspaper trusts "dropped a hint" in the proper quarter that if anybody dared to drag their disreputable secrets into the light of day, they would retaliate with sensational exposures of certain, evidently equally disreputable, secrets of the Labour press. It is generally known, for example, that the bulk of shares in the *Daily Herald*, the principal organ of the Labour Party, is held by A. G. Cousins, banker and exchange speculator, and that the Cadbury chocolate monopoly has a controlling interest in the leading Labour weekly, the *New Statesman and Nation* . . .

And here am I, who in ignorance have been toiling on and off for years for these chocolate monopolists, without having been given one single bar of Nut Milk. This is slavery indeed.

For some reason best known to itself, our popular Press publishes interviews with young German women visiting this country. I notice that all these interviews have the same tone, and it is a tone I much dislike, for it is pert and disagreeable. Now and again I receive letters from Germany, and too many of these letters seem to me querulous and impudent, as if the writers were closely related to the young women visitors. All this may amount to nothing. I have not set foot in Germany since the autumn of 1945, and I do not know what is really happening there. But I do not like this tone of voice. No good ever came of it. For my part I do not want Germans to whine—there was quite enough of that just after the war—but I wish they would discover some level sensible tone, belonging to polite citizens of the world, instead of this cheeky patronising style. And if this is the New Germany, I wish it did not sound so like the old one.

Took two daughters, after dinner last night, to a lively little revue called *Sauce Tartare*. Among its performers is a superb femine droll, Renee Houston ; and one of her best items, in which she burlesques a languishing Mayfair beauty, is a song about her "Mystery Man from M.I.5." Apparently this stalwart purger was as fascinating as he was fashionable—the most attractive masculine thing in Town. The song was funny, and it was magnificently done: we all laughed a lot. Nevertheless, it left me feeling uneasy. I am strongly in favour of laughing at mystery men from M.I.5., but I would be happier if this department were not already finding a place among those British institutions accepted and satirised by light entertainment. Incidentally, although the song was funny, some of us know much funnier things than that about M.I.5, though some of these funny things are perhaps no laughing matter.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The New Statesman," of August, 1924

London's Plan

Viaducts like Holborn and underground ways like that along Kingsway will almost certainly have to be multiplied in time . . . . St. Paul's Bridge is a project of a different order. Apart from the danger of knocking down the Cathedral, it is apparently a fairly straightforward engineering problem. The question is not whether it can be done, but whether it ought to be done. . . . Charing Cross is at present the storm-centre of the London traffic controversy. Trafalgar Square is already a maelstrom, and the Strand a funeral procession.

The Arts and Entertainment

POETRY WITHOUT WORDS

Death of a Salesman, the new play by the American Mr. Arthur Miller (whose *All My Sons* we saw last year) is at the moment, if we may trust reports, setting all New York weeping. At the Phoenix Theatre last week I did not observe any snuffling nor did I myself, though a ready enough snuffler, have to reach for my handkerchief once. I think it fairly describes the effect of the play to record that there was in the middle a good deal of that shifting of position and creaking of seats which indicate that attention is slipping : but that at the curtain fall the applause was long, loud and sincere. It was one of those comparatively rare plays, too, about which you are prepared to go on talking for two or three hours. But you may very likely find that you are not so much discussing the impact of the play itself as trying to account for the fact that the impact is so much smaller than it somehow ought to have been. Somehow much more expectation has been generated than ever gets satisfied. Immense care, elaboration, skill have been employed, and yet at the end we go away hungry. It is rather as if we had been invited to what promises to be a very grand dinner indeed. Jewels flash : starch gleams : the flowers on the table are exquisitely arranged : and heavens, we are dining off gold plate ! And yet and yet . . . the soup when it comes doesn't it strike us as being a little thin ? And how slow the service is ! It takes a long time to reach the sole. At least sole is what it is called on the menu. But doesn't it taste suspiciously like plaice ? And only one minute fillet each ! No doubt something more substantial will arrive presently. But no, what's this ? The ladies are already rising and now the coffee essence is going round. Still, even if we are a little empty we cannot but admire immensely the ravishing little coffee cups in which it is served, all green and gold—Russian, don't you think they must be, in origin ?

Mr. Miller in this play has joined the school of American playwrights (Saroyan, Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams) who are trying to break out of the constrictions of the naturalistic play form while at the same time retaining the realist contemporary subject. It is an attempt to make a poetic approach to every day life without using poetry—or even heightened speech. The characters are to remain as inarticulate as they are in real life ; the "poetry" is to be supplied by symbols, by the handling, the time-switches, the lighting ; the production, in short, is expected to do most of the work of evoking the heightened mood. Thus the Salesman of this play is living in a three-roomed Brooklyn house with his wife and two gone-to-the-bad sons. The stage design for this is skeletal ; we see all three rooms at once, and we see, even more important, looming up behind, the great lowering claustrophobic cliff of concrete skyscraper in which their living space is embedded. A highly effective design this, by Jo Mielziner. He is also responsible for the lighting which focuses our attention on one room or another as the little scenes shift to and fro. Or he may bring us to the front of the stage for the "flash-backs" into the idealised past when the boys were young and loved their father and he could still hope for himself and for them ; and this is "symbolised" by the leafy fringe projected in these scenes by a lantern on to the backcloth, shutting out the barren city landscapes to which their lives have now been reduced.

Willie Loman, a travelling salesman is at the end of his career. He is only sixty, but his life is sagging. He is worn out, worn out with travelling and with hoping and promising. The hopes have never materialised, the promises haven't been fulfilled, the travels are coming to an end—he is to lose his job this day. He still talks by habit as if he believed in a future, in turning some corner, in its all coming right. But the talk has already begun to fail to convince even himself. It is on his elder son, Biff, that his highest hopes have always centred—Biff, who adored him too, who was the star of the school football team, who was excused all his faults, adored and worshipped (all shown us in flashbacks). Why is Biff now at thirty a failure, and why does he now hate his Pop ? Why did he suddenly stop loving him somewhere around seventeen ? And why, the boys themselves wonder—Biff and Happy spotlighted in their bedroom on the first floor—has the old man started to go to pieces ? He talks to himself all the time now, and all the time about the past and Biff. And why does he keep smashing up the car ? This at least their mother can tell them—he is trying to kill himself and it's their fault ; he's old and tired and disappointed in them. It takes the first half of the play to get us so far. But after the interval the pace does begin to quicken, through a final disappointment in Biff, to the climactic reconciliation between father and son. This releases Willie Loman ("He likes me . . . He likes me . . . Remarkable, most remarkable") to walk out and kill himself.

There is no doubt that this play, episodic and rather rambling as it is, has a certain power. It creates a world and takes us into it. It gives off the feel of sincerity ; it has evidently been deeply, even solemnly felt. On the other hand it is altogether slighter than the author or the producer seems to have any idea of. The whole atmosphere in the theatre is heavily scented with self-importance. There is a sad lack of contrast ; there is hardly one moment's relief. The little theme is made to take itself much too seriously. In this sense it is sentimental : all the time it is being made to live far above its emotional and intellectual station.

The slightness derives partly from the fact that there are only one and a half characters to carry us along. The wife and the younger brother are on stage much of the time, it is true. But they aren't worked. They are really stooges, each given a character—she the perfect wife, he a girl-hungry bum—but they have no real part in the emotional texture of the drama. The elder son, Biff, comes alive only on the occasions when he comes in conflict with his father. Mr. Kevin McCarthy makes a very vivid character then of the young man fighting through the densities of the family optimism to try to discover himself behind them. But conflict only rises in the last quarter of the play and meanwhile the burden has fallen, too heavily, on Mr. Paul Muni as the salesman. I don't quite see what more he could have done for this character than he has, except perhaps to hasten the pace and insist on cutting his part. He gets the shallow, weak charm perfectly, the craving to be liked, the intoxication of optimism and the shuffle and sag of failure. But he has to go on repeating these without either words or actions to help him. In the end it gets repetitious. We begin to shift in our seats, even while we admire.

A contributory cause for this is the episodic time-switching and place-switching. A friend of mine said to me recently of this school of playwrights : They've discovered the secret of American audiences who, when they are in the theatre, would much rather be in the cinema. These devices belong to the cinema (and even at the cinema we have begun to groan when the flashbacks start). The playwright's ace is concentration of interest and the Unities are the principle behind that concentration. These switches keep dispersing the tension, which then needs to be laboriously built up again time after time. I hope this play will demonstrate to young playwrights here the barrennesss of such tricks.

But in the end it all boils down to one thing only—words. Poetry is made with words ; and in the poetic approach, nothing but words will in the last analysis bring success. Mr. Kazan may produce as brilliantly as he likes ;

he may bring out every device of lighting, grouping, stylising, timing and designing to evoke the play's moods. But none of them is an adequate substitute for the words which just aren't there.

T. C. WORSLEY

THE MOVIES

"We Were Strangers," at the Carlton
"City Across the River," at the Gaumont

We Were Strangers is the third film by John Huston we have seen in London in a year: the other two were *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* and *Key Largo*. Of those two the first was a time-honoured if gruelling journey with three gold hunters into the mountains: it impressed chiefly by preliminaries of character, and the casual brilliance of its Mexican episodes. Here, backed by cinematic skill, was a talent, inherently picturesque with a tendency to expend itself on conventional melodrama. Looking for gold it found a chestnut, and a no less hoary chestnut reappeared in *Key Largo*—the remote filling-station or hotel hold-up. Its familiar thrills, despite the impact of a new manner, had to be explained by a pre-war gangster coming back out of exile.

We Were Strangers represents a remarkable jump forward. The faults are still present: the large popular bid, "drama" taking the edge off realism, characters each doing their bit in turn, a silhouetted kiss, a Brock's benefit in the way of gunning, a sardonic-sentimental ditty reverted to too often for the sake of pathos. But this time the tension of filming has carried everything, and the theme is fresh. This attempt by Cuban revolutionaries in the Thirties to blow up a tyrannical President and his government may not come straight from the pages of history, though under Machado the conditions and the possibility were there. It is not, however, inherently absurd, as one critic has seemed to suggest: Guy Fawkes tried something of the sort here, under less provocation and with no more success. No, in general and on their own dramatic level, story and place and characters (with a few back-slidings) convince. The plot is hatched, not without scruples; an innocent (or comparatively innocent) public figure is to be murdered; the President and important members of his government will attend the burial in a public cemetery; there a bomb placed at the end of a long tunnel will blow them sky-high. Whether such action can conceivably be justified is not the film's point, but whether in certain circumstances and by certain kinds of men the action is likely to be undertaken. We are persuaded that it is. In the event—but I shan't encroach more on the plot, which is a good one. The long tunnelling, everyday coming and going about the City, the cat-and-mouse police, and the dangers to nerve and conscience achieve an unbreakable tension. As pure filming this is a triumph without a dead moment. Again and again, thanks to perspectives and a dramatic use of depths, one finds oneself not so much looking at the screen as exploring inside it.

And the characters, when they aren't showing their histrionic side uppermost, are very good indeed. The villainous Chief of Secret Police (Pedro Armendariz) swilling rum and tearing with his teeth at onions while he declares himself a man of sentiment to the girl he is trying to trap; the expressive hands and shrugging talk of the revolutionary elder (Ramon Novarro); the broken-down conspirator who wanders off through the streets babbling his news, and another who in moments of waiting twangs a guitar: these and many more flashes of nature are memorable indeed. Mr. John Garfield and Miss Jennifer Jones take the stresses, grimly personable, as hero and heroine of the revolution more than capably. As a social thriller *We Were Strangers* re-establishes its director, faults and all, beyond question.

Do you remember *The Naked City*? Similar methods and surroundings have produced *City Across the River*: slum streets, adolescent gang life and crime, pool rooms, bars, love caves, technical schools, the police bureau investigating murder. "Actually filmed in the teeming streets of Brooklyn!" exclaims the illustrated programme, and that is in fact the film's great merit. Its actors stand up to the background, and half-a-dozen youngsters, led by Peter Fernandez and Al Ramsen, enact the "mob" beautifully. The moral about slums and delinquency is rammed home in a few introductory and concluding sentences: and this, though calculated to make us wriggle, is better than interspersing it throughout the story.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

CLEAN ENGLISH FUN

WHAT is the silence that lies so heavy on the Royal Society of Arts? Is it the hush of water-colour artists gathered to honour the works of a deceased Academician? Of loyal citizens inspecting the preliminary sketches for a Royal Group? Or Society recognizing the sitters in the portrait-sketches of a talented noblewoman? Nothing of the sort: it is the silence of England's upper classes savouring the cream of her humorous art. Reverently, devotedly, they move from stand to stand, in a scrutiny only broken when excess of emotion prompts one to mark a cross in the catalogue at some especially deserving item.

Our English sense of humour is on display; this is no laughing matter. Not that laughter can be entirely lacking from an exhibition which starts with Rowlandson. (Why not with Hogarth?) Indeed, the first few artists included—Gillray, Cruickshank, Leech, Keene—are men of real perception, brilliant recorders of society in all its aspects. But too soon one finds gifts like theirs employed not to record but to disguise facts that might prove uncomfortable to the well-to-do. The poor, for instance, are represented as absurd, rascally, or at best, the necessary focuses of upper-class pity. The problems of a depressed agricultural population vanish behind a drawing like Richard Caldecott's "Not such disagreeable weather for hay-makers as some people think," (No. 32) where the farmers and their women-folk are shown taking advantage of a storm to flirt under Kate Greenaway umbrellas. It is a pity the best joke in this *genre* has been omitted. It shows a lady of fashion, (1912), leaving the slum-alley she has just "visited" with the query "But, vicar, isn't it all rather *overdone*?"

Now that the working classes have got out of hand, this joke has been turned inside out; the plight of the rich replaces the absurdity of the poor. "I offered £10,000," Acanthus's house-hunter tells his wife as they leave the alms-house, "but you've got to be destitute to get in here." Three drawings on this theme are included among the twenty or so executed since the war.

The bulk of the exhibition covers the first forty years of this century. Then there were only about five jokes that humorous artists knew would be immediately recognized as funny: the modern art joke (*I'm sorry, Mr. Smith, but we only deal in the work of artists whose names are difficult to pronounce*); the anachronism joke (*Sorry, Madam, no toe of frog—only frog substitutes*); the incorrigible Tommy Atkins joke (*'Ush, Ginger, you'll give the town a bad name*); the ridiculous foreigner joke ("*Vy iss der flute more softly dan it can?*" "*Pecause dey does*"; and the England-is-so-charmingly-English joke, dotted about the whole exhibition. Never a touch of smut, you see, just good clean fun; clean of anger, wit, intelligence. A curious thing about this castration of humorous possibility is that it stops at print. For if *Punch* represents a society where a multitude of subjects—prostitutes, pregnancy, honeymoons, chamber-pots—are held naughty and therefore unprintable, so does the dirty story, in which the same things are for the same reason thought marvellously amusing.

Fortunately for the visitor, this century's exhibits are not entirely without humour. There are some really funny drawings by Osbert Lancaster and Sir Max Beerbohm; there are

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three political cartoons by the late Sir Bernard Partridge; there are the fantasies of Pont and Emett, descendants of Gillray on the one hand and Dickie Doyle on the other; and for those who spent many childhood hours reading *Punch* on the library floor, there are the meccano-minded capriccios of Heath Robinson. The total innocence of these last is delightful, but it does not bode well for humorous art. In most hands such guilelessness is indistinguishable from infantilism, at least at the Royal Society of Arts.

DAVID CARRITT

RADIO NOTES

PRESUMED bad until proved to be good: such seems to be one's approach to plays heard on the air. Up goes no curtain, and the listener sits patient, while the evidence attempts to secure a foothold in his mind. Much may depend on these opening minutes: clarity, audibility, discretion as to emphasis, avoidance of tiresome distractions, quality of the lines themselves. It is curious how distasteful many lines seem, which one might pass easily in the theatre. For example, when Mary Morris, as the *Antigone* of Jean Anouilh's play, has to say—"You want me as a woman, don't you? Your arms around me weren't lying, were they?"—it is the playwright (or his translator) who has set one's teeth on edge. This vein of modishness comes off very badly on the air, I find (unless of course it is played as such, in the *Private Lives* manner). Does Anouilh interest us in his argument? M'yes, once or twice, in the long conversation between Creon and Antigone. But there are too many silly modernisms ("I shan't let a little matter like that persuade me to order my wife to have a blood-test"), too much voguish philosophising, and an air of self-indulgent dilettantism, which makes his play weak just where it needs to be strong. Frank Hauser's production did its best with all this, and Peter Ustinov was a pretty good, kept-on-the-leash Creon. The guards (Malcolm Hayes, Dafydd Havard, Eric Francis) were also effective, but their perky colloquialisms ("and get a bit of a load on, and then on to the palace") were a little too good to be true.

There may be circumstances, extenuating or aggravating, to help predispose judgment. Long ago I read the Scottish novel *Sunset Song* by Lewis Grassic Gibbon, and have always remembered its quality, a sort of sharp charm, nostalgic but not sentimental. Consequently, I listened with hope and interest to the first of three instalments of a radio adaptation (originally broadcast last December in the Scottish Home Service). On the whole this was rather good, though dwindling too easily and often into a sort of rhapsodic semi-inaudibility. It took some while to realise that what one missed were the long, upland stretches of sheer prose, which gave the novel its staying-power, and its wide horizon. By contrast, the happenings, movements, changes, emphasised in Mr. James Crampsey's radio chronicle, are less interesting; in the novel (or rather, in the novel trilogy, of which *Sunset Song* was the first) they are, as it were, mere dips or folds, come upon as one traverses the great stretch of ground. It is hard to see how this difficulty could be solved, short of simply reading the novel. Lennox Milne was pleasant in the central part of the girl, Chris Guthrie; and a magnificent sermon, about the creation of the world, was spoken beautifully by an unnamed actor.

The Ringer was a likeable crook. After all, he was only a crook, for all his pomp and mystery, and one was pleased when he escaped the law so brilliantly. I have never been able to feel the same about *The Four Just Men*, whose horrible exploits have been converted by Felix Felton into a radio play. The Four, with their pseudo-sophistication and monstrous pretensions, are quite the meanest product of Edgar Wallace's mind. Here they are, slaughtering a Foreign Secretary and a pickpocket, for no real reason, patting themselves on the backs for it, and making good entertainment, if you can accept it as such.

A word of thanks to Rex Harris and Lord Donegal for their programmes of records of seedy old swing classics. There was something civilised and unfacetious in their way of introducing these records, which improved the pleasure of hearing them again.

MARK OGILVIE

William Townsend, at Roland, Browse and Delbanco's.

This exhibition of landscapes by William Townsend deserves careful attention. Clearly Mr. Townsend must qualify for a place among the better of the Euston Road painters. That he comes so late before the public with these London landscapes—in manner more akin to the prevailing mood of 1939 than of 1949—matters less than might have been expected. We can enjoy conscientious craftsmanship at any time: and artistic honesty is no less valuable to-day than before the war. But the limitations of the Euston approach are as evident in Townsend as in Gowing. Colour is used too exclusively to register tonal distinctions and too little in its own right as an agent of sensuous expression. And we may notice a curious fact about the Eustonish choice of subject: architecture submits far more happily to this school's severe tonal notation than trees or the soft contours of the open fields. The eye trained in this style finds its way most easily amongst rectangularities of half-demolished houses, blitzed cellars near St. Paul's and, indeed, any sort of buildings. But a tree becomes amorphous, awkwardly bulbous and its colours and tones also go astray, as we see in Mr. Townsend's works. He tries to correct this by hardening his silhouettes (always too latent among the more plastic planes) of trees and bushes into a decorative line—but without much success. He is at his best in the excellently observed panorama of distant buildings in a picture like *South Bank*.

Correspondence

THE PEAK AND THE LAKES

SIR,—When the Labour Government came to power in 1945, the many voluntary movements which exist in this country for the double purpose of preserving the countryside and making wild country available for the use and enjoyment of the people were greatly encouraged. This, after all, was the people's government; it was only natural to suppose that it would see to it that the people's rights of access to wild and unspoilt country were preserved.

The earlier negotiations between Mr. Silkin and such bodies as the Ramblers' Association reinforced this view. Mr. Silkin received deputations with courtesy and friendliness and promised a Bill conferring the right of access to wild country and establishing National Parks.

The Bill which was actually introduced into Parliament a few months ago was something of a disappointment, its general effect being to suggest that the rights of the public as a whole must be subordinated to local interests, even in districts such as the Lake District which were predominantly of national rather than of local concern.

Meanwhile, members of countryside organisations have noted with growing concern a number of disquieting individual incidents. Here are two.

It is some twenty years now since a cement works was established despite protests in the Hope Valley in the heart of the Peak District. In 1948, not long after the announcement of the district as one of the first four National Parks, a fresh and very considerable extension of these works, involving the erection of a chimney higher than St. Paul's, was proposed and at a public inquiry sanctioned by the Minister of Town and Country Planning. There was a flood of protests from the amenity societies.

The Ramblers' Association is accustomed to hold an annual Rally in the Peak District, at which speeches are made on such topics as access to mountains and moorlands, National Parks and countryside preservation. This year Mr. Silkin proposed himself as a speaker, but later declined to speak if the question of the extension of the cement works was mentioned. The Ramblers, whose former militancy has been emasculated by recent Ministerial embraces, agreed to the prohibition, and the Rally took place without a reference to the most heinous of the outrages which its sponsoring body exists to prevent.

Not less disquieting is the case of the seaplane assembly factory at Calgarth on Lake Windermere. This was erected in 1940, written pledges being given at the time to the C.P.R.E. and the Friends of the Lake District that it should be removed "as soon as the military situation makes it safe to do so." The pledge was reiterated by the Government in 1945 in the course of the debates on the Requisitioned Land and War Works Act. In May of this year the Board of Trade published a notice to the effect that the factory was to be removed and followed it up by an announcement that, subject to satisfactory price arrangements, the Ministry of Works had agreed to sell the buildings to firms in Kendal and Newcastle. One building only, the erecting shop, remained to be disposed of.

In spite of this announcement, Mr. Silkin, speaking at Ambleside in June, in support of the local Labour candidate, made a plea to the Friends of the Lake District and the C.P.R.E. not to insist upon the carrying out by the Government of its pledge. At the same time local signatures have been obtained to a petition begging the Government *not* to remove the factory on the ground that it gives employment and that "the needs of the Lake District" require the factory. (In fact, there were 24 men and women registered as unemployed at the Windermere exchange in February 1949 and none at Kendal. The phrase, "the needs of the Lake District" must therefore, be presumed to mean "its needs" *as an industrial area.*)

In effect, then, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, whose functions include the preservation and use of the Lake District as a National Park, is seeking to evade pledges which have been specifically given with a view to ensuring that it should, in fact, be preserved. Are these disquieting incidents an attempt to make the best of incompatible worlds, a surrender to the needs of vote-catching, or the expression of an irremediable Philistinism?

C. E. M. JOAD

LETTER FROM THE BACK ROOM

SIR,—I am distressed by the thought of Mr. J. B. Priestley sitting up later and later reading my novel *A Sort of Traitors* and being more and more depressed by it. It sounds like a miserable evening, which is the last thing I wish him. I may have misunderstood him, but Mr. Priestley's attitude appears to be "I don't know whether scientific workers are like this. I hope not. But this man seems convincing when I am reading him, and I should hate to think that he is right."

May I suggest, with the greatest respect to Mr. Priestley's experience and authority, that this suggests an objective standard of reality about "what people are like" which is quite untenable? For every individual, people are "like" he sees them, through his own particular brand of distorting spectacles. No novelist's characters tell one anything of universal truth about people. They merely tell one things—and often very deplorable things—about the novelist. When, as Mr. Priestley rather defensively puts it, I "take him in"—i.e., convince him for the time being—it merely means that some bit of the truth as I see it corresponds with some bit of the truth as he fears it. The "flatland of the spirit" which worries him is neither an absolute truth nor a mere wild invention in Kent. It is only the public statement of a personal vision which every writer makes in every book he writes, and which is at once his limitation and his value—if any.

NIGEL BALCHIN

Leigh Barton, Stelling Minnis,
Nr. Canterbury.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SIR,—In Mr. Crossman's article on Public Schools, he speaks of their function in educating a "responsible *élite*. This function is necessary in any modern State." By *élite*, I assume he means those few who hold responsible positions in the Civil Service, the Armed Forces, industry and business. They have been

prepared by the Public Schools for these positions in two ways: they have been given a training that undoubtedly fits them for these posts as they are constituted at present and their way into the *élite* is smoothed by the fact of their belonging to the Public School circle. It is possible to enter the *élite* from other than this circle but those who do are usually absorbed, i.e., they take on the values, habits and accents of the Public School Man.

Socialists have always known that these *élite* positions must be filled and operated although perhaps not in the present manner. They have declared their intention of breaking-up this system of drawing from one class and replacing it by one of equal opportunity. Mr. Crossman's proposal to retain the Public Schools as *élite* training centres will mean the selection and segregation of a new class of *élite* at the age of 13—*élite* to be trained in the humanistic tradition and, as presumably they will be taught by the same staffs that boss the Public Schools at present, in the familiar chosen race attitude of the class we, as Socialists, wish to abolish. At the best, we shall see the emergence of a new ruling class who grow up and are trained away and apart from their fellows—a new ruling class more to be feared than the old because the methods of selection will ensure their greater efficiency.

Surely, in the type of society we wish to bring about, the *élite* positions must be filled not by men and women who have grown up in the seclusion of a special boarding school, but those who have knowledge of their fellows gained by working and living alongside them. If this should delay their selection 10 years beyond the age suggested by Mr. Crossman, so much the better.

The ultimate objective in respect of Public Schools is difficult to formulate. Abolition of them as centres for training an *élite* is an essential of any plan. Most can be integrated into the national system in one way or another as it would be a pity to waste their buildings and facilities. Some, perhaps, could be turned over to ease the strain on higher and adult education. Some of these may even help to keep alive that humanist tradition and to provide the teachers necessary for the high standard of scholarship Mr. Crossman mentions.

Kexbrough, Darton. J. P. MORRIS

SIR,—In his article on "The Public School System," Mr. Crossman assumes that the education given at the Public Schools is better than that given at our Grammar Schools. There is no warrant for such an assumption. From the point of view of developing intellectual ability and physical fitness in their pupils the Grammar Schools are quite equal to the Public Schools; and, in sending his child to a Grammar School, the parent is not condemning him to an "inferior education." The advantages of a Public School education are not educational at all but social and economic.

The Public School gives to its pupils a specialised accent, which serves as a kind of herd-signal by which they can recognise one another in after-life, a deeply rooted conviction that they are superior to the rest of mankind, and the entrance into a freemasonry which ensures them priorities in the better-paid jobs.

One rarely finds an old Etonian or a Wykhamist selling matches in the gutter. He is much more likely to be sitting on the Treasury Bench whatever Party is in power. Mr. Crossman's proposal therefore to pour public money into the Public Schools would be the State endowment of special privilege.

Mr. Crossman, as Dr. Corlett has pointed out, completely evades the issue of selection. If a minority of boys and girls in our State schools are to be given a free Public School education how are they to be selected? There are fairly reliable tests of General Intelligence, and quite reliable tests of acquired knowledge and of physical fitness, but what tests are there which can select the "potential manager of men" at the age of 13?

There are, of course, none at all. Judging from his own writings, Mr. Winston Churchill would not have been selected as a "potential manager of men" at the age of 13. Napoleon certainly would not have been. He was unpopular with his school-fellows, and it is not very likely that Mr. Herbert Morrison's great capacities for moving the pawns on the political chessboard would have been demonstrated by any test at the age of 13. A Public School place would cost the tax-payer from £250 to £400 a year as compared with £40 to £50 for a Grammar School place. Should we be justified in spending on one boy at a Public School, who has been selected by some strange necromancy, six to eight times as much as that spent on a boy at a Grammar School? Surely what additional money we have to spare should be spent on improving our own schools—the State schools.

Personally, I hope that in an increasingly egalitarian and democratic society the Public Schools will "wither away." I am loth to prolong their lives by giving them a blood transfusion from public funds.

House of Commons. RALPH MORLEY

BLOOD SPORTS

SIR,—It is always a pleasure to read the articles of Mr. Clive Bell, for no one is a better master of sophistry. But it is not the pleasure of killing but of *the chase* and all its associations that is the point of hunting. Hunting, as Burton said, is *a cure for melancholy*—a remedy much in demand in these days of neo-Puritanism.

The kill, or an occasional kill, is the necessary condition of hunting, not the sole intention or object. And don't forget, Mr. Bell, *Foxes love hunting*, nor, as chicken farmers know, do foxes always kill to eat.

Compton, Guildford. R. W. ALSTON

THE SHOW'S THE THING

SIR,—"Tanestol" agrees with my article but challenges a few points. He says:

(1) and (2). That a British Acoustical Society is unnecessary as acoustics are already being dealt with by several Societies. These efforts are recent. I was at work in 1938 on a Council which was to deal, amongst other things, with these matters, but the formation of the Council was later officially opposed by the Arts Council. Perhaps it would have been better to attack this problem by a central organisation rather than by separate and smaller committees. The question arises—who is to give authoritative advice? Which of the Societies? How can one distinguish between them? Could not a central body have access to more information?

(3) Thirty years ago the wastage in a transformer was 2 per cent. It would hardly be more now. "Tanestol's" average wastage in ordinary dimming of 40 per cent. would continue throughout the performance. The wastage in my apparatus is 2 per cent. and it costs a tenth of "Tanestol's." I think that a good proposition.

(4) At Glyndebourne we have over 200 circuits to dim. 200 rheostats would occupy a room and need a lot of ventilation. My apparatus we put in a cupboard. The usual control panel mentioned by "Tanestol" is made with the most glaring deficiencies.

(5) That the acoustics can well be different when the auditorium is empty or full. At Glyndebourne empty and full seem to be the same. Then how are you going to rehearse if you know that it will anyhow sound different when the building is full? Perhaps "Tanestol" thinks rehearsal is unnecessary. Some institutions apparently agree with him.

Last year *The Times* wrote of "the perfect auditorium at Glyndebourne. At Glyndebourne as nowhere else you can hear every nuance." In 1939 the B.B.C. sent its Physicists to make a private investigation of Glyndebourne—and in the words of their head Physicist "to find out what we had done, which they had been unable to do: these were the best acoustics they had found anywhere." We changed our acoustics twice before we achieved these results. The purpose of my article was that we must have perfection in our new buildings, and that responsibility must be fixed for every detail in their construction.

Glyndebourne. JOHN CHRISTIE

MANY DIMENSIONS

SIR,—My attention has only just been drawn to Mr. Heppenstall's critique of Charles Williams, which appeared under "Books in General" in your issue of May 21st. In support of his contention that Williams based the characters in his novels on his friends and acquaintances Mr. Heppenstall claims that the ideas of the Lord Chief Justice in *Many Dimensions* "are those of Mr. A. O. Badfield." The (to me) gratifying innuendo is ruled out by the fact that I did not meet Williams before 1935, whereas *Many Dimensions* was first published in 1931.

Uckfield, Sussex. A. O. BADFIELD

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE Comic Spirit has distributed its beneficent influence somewhat unequally across the centuries. Again and again it has enabled the human race to guffaw in delighted appreciation of the vices and absurdities of our fellow human creatures; but the gift of laughing at ourselves has been bestowed upon us very much less frequently; and for long periods of time we can distinguish little trace of it. Did Napoleon, even for a moment, considering his own image, find that he could raise a smile there? And Napoleon introduced a lengthy series of romantic and self-centred characters who contemplated with unruffled solemnity their reflections in the looking-glass. They may have deplored: they rarely derided. Benjamin Constant on the other hand, though many of his chief failings were derived from the Romantic Movement, and though the problem of his personal existence never ceased to fascinate him, lacked the humourless self-absorption of most nineteenth century heroes. A sense of the ludicrous was always intruding. He might set the stage for a tragic or pathetic scene; then in the wings appeared his own reflections like a kind of comic *doppelganger*—a tall, shambling, awkward personage, whose red-rimmed eyes blinked and fluttered behind preposterous green-lensed spectacles, his finger in his mouth and his carroty hair on end: an apparition that no critical audience could be expected to take seriously.

If they hooted and hissed, he was inclined to agree. Perhaps his beloved had been right to refuse his devotion? Perhaps his enemies were not altogether misguided when they declared he was an opportunist? Thus, having indulged during the Hundred Days in some outrageous coat-turning, he composed a majestic defence of his conduct which induced the good-natured Louis XVIII to grant him a free pardon, but immediately spoiled the effect by the sort of joke that, as a keen student of life, he must have suspected would be repeated and remembered. He suffered poignantly in his relations with women—how poignantly and sincerely we may learn by reading *Adolphe*: but in the inferno of the alcove he could not resist a pleasantry. Madame de Staël was an amorous despot; year after tormented year he languished in her household as in a luxurious concentration-camp, and, to make the situation yet more difficult, in spite of her hysterical exactions, he respected and admired her; but the ridiculous side of his predicament never quite eluded him. That it was tragic, he understood clearly: "It is hard (he groaned) to have neither the amusements for which one sacrifices one's dignity, nor the dignity for which one sacrifices one's amusements." But worse than the loss of dignity was, frankly, the loss of sleep. He was now no longer a very young man; and Madame de Staël, who chose to sit up as a matter of course till three or four o'clock in the morning, expected that lovers and admirers, past, present and prospective, should follow her example. "Obviously I must marry" (Constant decided) "if only to get to bed at a reasonable hour."

Such clear-sightedness is evidently disconcerting; and Benjamin Constant has puzzled and disconcerted several generations. He refuses to solidify into a single pose. Towards the end of his career, he achieved distinction as a determined and outspoken Liberal; yet he retained much of his juvenile levity, while the robes of the Elder Statesman were settling on his shoulders; and, once the Chamber had risen, he could still be seen in uniform and decorations hurrying off to lose his money at a *Palais Royal* gambling-den. Nor did he desist from amatory escapades until, at the age of fifty-one, having attempted to impress some feminine acquaintance by a light leap over a garden-wall, he injured his hip-bone so severely that he was obliged to take to crutches. Up to that point, and possibly beyond it—though, indeed, there is no record of any later love-affair—the agitation of his emotions and senses was continuous and violent. He had studied the subject of love with passionate interest; but all the sad wisdom exhibited in *Adolphe* did not lessen his susceptibility or make his progress easier. Love, said Byron, was a "hostile transaction"; and Constant in his darker moods would undoubtedly have agreed with him—except that it was a battle in which he could never resolve either to conquer or be conquered. Too soft-hearted to become a dominant lover—at heart too diffident and feminine—he was also too obstinate and head-strong to become a tolerably contented slave.

It has been asserted that every man or woman gets the mistresses or lovers he or she deserves: that every object of love corresponds to a hidden strength or weakness: but even according to this theory Benjamin Constant was singularly unfortunate. He had a weakness for wasting time; and both Madame de Charrière and Madame de Staël were quite exceptionally skilful time-wasters. He liked to dissipate his talents in conversation; and each was a fantastically loquacious person, only happy when spinning out in endless fine-drawn talk her own emotional, spiritual and intellectual entrails. Talk, it is true, with Madame de Charrière, brought him stimulating and enchanting hours. He was nineteen; she was forty-seven. Nearly twenty years had elapsed since James Boswell had acclaimed Belle de Zuylen as his "charming Dutchwoman," and had informed Temple that "upon his soul" he must somehow contrive to wed her and take her home to Auchinleck; and, what with a dull marriage and an unhappy *liaison*, the intervening period had been wearisome and slow-paced. But her thirst for life flamed as bright as ever; and in the volatile, adventurous Benjamin she seemed to find her counterpart. They talked and talked interminably: it is possible, though not probable, that they made occasional mundane love:

> They would retire together (writes Mr. Harold Nicolson)* . . . to her corner sitting room, with its two tables covered with papers and music scores, its sofa and its china stove. At midnight she would move next door into her high scarlet bed and he would sit on talking to her until the church clock outside struck two or three or four. Sometimes, but only rarely, she would pause in her conversation and there would be a momentary silence. He would glance up slyly—"Eh bien, Madame?" he would ask her. "Eh bien, Madame?" and then the torrent of their talk would again be unloosed.

Alas, though Zélide loved and Benjamin admired, and for weeks and months at a time continued to drink in mental stimulus, there could be no permanent balance of feeling between these ill-matched partners. He was restless and extravagant and young: she was middle-aged and disillusioned and emotionally grasping. A variety of phantoms teased and alarmed her. "I have within me" (she once declared) "a relentless enemy—black imagination. It poisons all my pleasure." The atmosphere in which she lived was not one in which a young adventurer, however unconventional his disposition, was likely to breathe comfortably; and little by little he grew tired of their unfruitful midnight conferences, and began to hanker for the free world beyond her gloomy garden-wall. He must establish his name, acquire a fortune, occupy a respectable situation in which his father could feel proud of him. He was intensely ambitious as well as romantically amorous; but the respectability to which he aspired was continually slipping through his fingers, and before very long he was once again in servitude: the prisoner of Germaine de Staël, whose despotism he could not finally shake off till he himself was almost middle-aged, till he had run away and been recaptured—reduced to subjection by furious threats of suicide—had secretly married Charlotte von Hardenberg who provided the matrimonial pillow for which his weary head was craving) and had survived a succession of scenes and scandals which would have swept any ordinary lover into a mad-house or his death bed.

Constant's relationship with Madame de Staël, which lasted from the winter of 1794 to the early summer of 1811—Charlotte became his wife, at first unacknowledged and subsequently disavowed, on June 5th, 1808—has been described by many previous biographers, appreciatively or critically, according to their temperaments. Mr. Harold Nicolson attacks this dolorous episode in a sensible and lucid fashion; but here as elsewhere I have the impression that the hapless Prisoner of Coppet does not quite command his sympathy. He does not much appreciate the gaoler—and what could be more natural? She had an "incandescent exuberance." She developed a fierce devotion for her ungainly, red-haired gallant, who had at one stage filled her with so "insurmountable a physical repulsion" that she immersed her arm in a jug of scented water after having touched him. But she remains the grotesque and exorbitant figure whom the London dandies laughed at, wearing turbans of emerald and scarlet and numerous floating scarves of purple and gold—colours by which she sought to "divert attention from her oatmeal complexion and enhance the black brilliance of her eyes. Every morning and every evening the gardeners at Coppet would cut for her a fresh sprig of laurel or mistletoe, of myrtle or osier. She would twirl these green emblems in her fingers or wave them on high, giving thereby a Sibylline grandeur to her gestures . . ." Moreover she was strangely androgynous. Madame de Staël, remarked Talleyrand, had recently written a novel in which he and she were both disguised as women; and, whereas her instincts were alarmingly feminine, the methods she adopted to satisfy them revealed a masculine brutality. She was man-woman to Constant's woman-man; and the ambiguity of his sexual attitude as displayed at Coppet—towards women other than Germaine de Staël he could be capricious and tyrannical—is from the biographer's point of view equally puzzling and exasperating. It provides a further proof of that distressing instability on which his friends all commented.

It is particularly exasperating for Mr. Nicolson, a master, at his best, of the clear, incisive outline; for Constant's personality reveals no single outline that does not, as we read on, merge gradually into a second and third. He had one or two real loyalties, but a hundred provisional allegiances which obscured and overlay them. Always at work on his own self-portrait, he produced a picture that suggests one of those achievements of pre-historic cave-painting, where the artist was constantly superimposing some new and graphic after-thought, using the same prominence in the rock-wall to bear the representations of several different animals. But that he was an artist—and an artist of astonishing sensitiveness—his biographers must perforce agree. As a sketch for a young man's autobiography, the famous *Cahier Rouge* has seldom been improved on.

* *Benjamin Constant.* By Harold Nicolson. *Constable.* 18*s.*

Adolphe, the product of confusion and agony—a record of his unhappy life with Madame de Staël, grafted on to an account of a far less trying love-affair, his passage with an Irishwoman known as Anna Lindsay—is a triumph of cool analysis, started under the spur of feeling and completed within fifteen days. He had prodigious powers of mental application whenever the centrifugal forces of his nature permitted them their full scope; and during that fortnight of excited composition he earned the immortality he had long and vainly dreamed of. Inconsequence and perversity vanished: his energies were concentrated in one absorbing effort: and the result was a brief but cruel narrative—like the "little book" in *Revelations*, smooth on the tongue but bitter in the stomach—among the cruellest studies of the effects of unwise passion ever added to the pages of modern European literature.

PETER QUENNELL

SINGING HISTORY

The Spirit of Revolution in 1789. By CORNWELL B. ROGERS. *Princeton University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 27s. 6d.*

My taste in history is old-fashioned and orthodox. I like narrative based on documents: no guesses, no psychological jargon, no attempt to turn history into anthropology. I had, therefore, an initial hostility to the idea of discovering what the French people thought in 1789 by analysing the popular songs in the early days of the Revolution. Mr. Rogers has, of course, a high academic air: ninety pages of bibliography; a heavy, flat-footed style, usual in American academic works; and not much psychological mumbo-jumbo. In fact, I revolted only when he displayed the "black-white principle"—meaning that in times of crisis men think one way or the other, instead of havering between them. This is as profound as the "hot-cold principle," (my own discovery), which lays down that more people lie out on the grass in hot weather than in cold. Mr. Rogers has catalogued his songs meticulously; I am not convinced that he has weighed them. Is he sure that in the songs of 1789 demand determined supply? I find no distinction in his book between songs that were genuinely popular and songs that were published but perhaps never sung. In other words what Mr. Rogers is studying is the psychology of French songwriters, not the psychology of the French people. I wonder whether they were the same. Mr. Rogers, I suppose, would argue that the song-writers were representative of general feeling and wrote what they thought would be popular. I am doubtful even of this. To take a similar case, would a study of the music-hall songs of 1945 truly reveal why the returning soldier, the agricultural labourer, the small shopkeeper, the Editor of the NEW STATESMAN and myself voted Labour? I suspect that instead the study would prove that we had all voted Tory.

Despite these criticisms, I got much more from Mr. Rogers than I expected to. Or rather, the best thing about his book is that I did not get very much. His material is novel; his conclusions leave things much as they were. The French people of 1789 (or at any rate the French song-writers) had limitless hope for the future; they were also extremely frightened in the present. They were loyal to Louis XVI, to whom they looked for leadership; they were also ready to threaten him with violence at the least disappointment. They believed simultaneously in equality and in despotism; in universal peace and a revolutionary crusade; in brotherly love and in bloodshed. They supposed they were starting a new age; yet presented this always in the form of "restoring" Roman or primitive freedoms. Mr. Rogers makes a good point when he observes that "fraternity," despite its universal ring, was a direct reminiscence of Freemasonry and the other secret societies of the eighteenth-century: the French people, in fact, were enjoying all the sensations of being "initiated." Mr. Rogers makes another good point when he suggests that the French people tried to escape from their psychological contradictions by means of a "dual leadership," Louis XVI and Necker (God the Father and God the Son, in fact, though he never explicitly says so). Thus they could admire authority and liberty, tradition and change at the same time. The conflict, he adds, was resolved only when the French discovered in Napoleon a symbol which could cover both ideas. Implicit in the songs of 1789, was the Terror and the Empire; the attack on Christianity and the war against Europe; restricted suffrage and the law of the Maximum; in fact, everything that happened in French history afterwards. The demonstration is clever; all the same, if French history had taken quite a different course, I wonder whether this, too, could not have been shown to be just as implicit in the songs of 1789. It is always easy to foretell the future when you already know what it is going to be. Besides, I still have an absurd suspicion that even the French of 1789 did some thinking in the intervals of singing. The psychological historian is allowed to think, but not the people with whom he is dealing. This is the "one-way street principle" (another of my inventions): I see through you, but you don't see through me.

Finally, Mr. Rogers ought to have given us music as well as words. The tunes would make the words sound very different; and, in some cases, it would have been obvious that the words were dictated simply by the shape of the tune. We would then have had a clearer idea also which songs were genuinely singable and which were a flop from the start. Popular tunes ought to reveal something of popular psychology; but the technical problems involved in this are beyond me and, I fear, beyond Mr. Rogers.

A. J. P. TAYLOR

MODERNIST FARQUHAR

Young George Farquhar. By WILLARD CONNELY. *Cassell. 21s.*

Theatrically, George Farquhar is a rediscovery of the 1940's. True, the number of performances of *The Constant Couple* and *The Recruiting Sergeant* in London during 1943, 4, 5, and 6 compares unfavourably with the smash-hit of *The Constant Couple* at Drury Lane in 1699–1700, but this year's production of *The Beaux' Stratagem* is putting us ahead. In any case the success of *The Constant Couple* was something unprecedented in Drury Lane—it was emphasised by a famous flop at a rival theatre in March 1700 of another new play, *The Way of the World*.

In his own day Farquhar's was a success story. In our day he is catching up with Sheridan because he is one of the most actable of playwrights, and of all Restoration men he seems most like a contemporary of our own. In this instance the theatre lags behind the critics, for William Archer rediscovered Farquhar long ago when he edited four (out of seven) of his plays in the Mermaid series. Archer in 1908 was as enthusiastic as audiences are now. This is how he summed up:

> Throughout the history of the English drama it seems that the gifts of the gods have always come at the wrong time, or have been wrongly distributed, or cancelled by sheer misadventure. Fate seems to have repented of the favouritism shown us at Stratford-on-Avon in 1564 and relentlessly set itself to re-establish the balance.
>
> Among the cross accidents above alluded to, not the least, I think, was the death in his thirtieth year of Captain George Farquhar.

Farquhar stood at a cross-roads in the theatre—and I think in literature in general. *The Constant Couple* which Farquhar wrote when he was twenty-one or two was produced about eighteen months after the onslaught on the theatre by that incorrigible Jacobite and High Churchman Jeremy Collier. It is one of the odder ironies that the Roundheads get all the blame for the

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WORLD REVIEW

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undoing of the theatre which was more effectively furthered by a non-juror and finished off by Sir Robert Walpole. For while I think theatre histories (and Mr. Connely too) often make Jeremy Collier a cause when he is really an effect, the non-juror certainly voiced a change of mood. The theatre in 1698 was 'ripe for reform' —or repression. Farquhar wrote *Love and a Bottle* and *The Constant Couple*, which are both post Collier, in a mood of defiant outspokenness and with a free handling of sex. But as play succeeds play he becomes less daring and more respectable. Some people say this is as it should be: he was becoming more responsible, and something else was happening. In his last three plays *The Twin Rivals*, *The Recruiting Sergeant*, and *The Beaux' Stratagem* he coaxed the theatre into new country. He brought his own experience into the theatre, and it was a breath of fresh air for stifled audiences. He introduced what some people would call "a documentary element" into the theatre.

But it wasn't all plain sailing. Something was going wrong. Long before Farquhar died the virtue seemed to be oozing out of his pen, the vitality out of his plays. He never regains the sparkle of *The Constant Couple*. Was the trouble the atmosphere of Jeremy Collier and his generation? Is this also a reason why Farquhar had no successors in the theatre till, a hundred years later, Thomas Holcroft? Even Holcroft was a flash in the pan. Farquhar began what I shall call "The Modern Man's Autobiography" in the theatre but we had to wait for Ibsen and Strindberg to finish it. Does this conjunction sound forced? I know most people would say, "If you want a modern comparison, then Farquhar was the Noel Coward of his generation—we can omit the Scandinavians!" That would seem to me true but timid. Farquhar was looking for truth in sexual relationships and in this reminds one of the Scandinavians though he was much happier than they were.

A biography was overdue but Mr. Connely's hardly fills the bill, indeed he manages to say less in his 316 pages than Archer did in 29. He has done some original research and has gone back to the documents, but there is no critical evaluation in his book which is far too busy inventing amorous adventures based on the love-letters Farquhar published as pot-boilers. Once you start reading fiction as truth there's no stopping. It fills up all the space that might have been devoted to examining the career of a great writer.

Farquhar is interesting as a writer but his amours are as dull as the next man's. He began penniless. How did he live as a writer? The answer is in the word "benefits." The third night of each new play was benefit night for the author. *The Constant Couple* gave Farquhar a good many benefits—and there's a dubious tradition that he died on the benefit night of *The Beaux' Stratagem*. One benefit could make him £100 on which he might, with economy, live a year. Now Farquhar was an adventurer who came to crack the nut of the metropolis. He was a last rather than a first swallow, for with the narrowing of the theatre came an insistence on literary forms in which it was impossible for a vulgar audience to shout down a cultivated patron. When Pope wrote the line:

"And what pert dialogue hath Farquhar writ?"

he was speaking for a generation which had accepted another literary outlook, an outlook which involved saying good-bye for the time being to the sort of independence a writer enjoys when he can make a living by writing, which at this time he could do in the theatre but not in other forms. Pope secured himself by translating Homer, Johnson by a dictionary, Richardson by his shop, Fielding by his stipend as a magistrate. Farquhar who died at thirty was one of the last of a bohemian generation that lived on its wits and dated back, I daresay, to Marlowe, and before. Apart from a few "sports" like Savage, Goldsmith, Chatterton, I don't think the breed crops up again for another century or so.

MONTAGU SLATER

WOODCOCK AND RHODODENDRON

Enough of Action. By EDWARD LYDALL. *Cape.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Burma's Icy Mountains. By F. KINGDON-WARD. *Cape.* 15*s.*

Mr. Lydall was the President of the Manipur State Council when the Japs made their attempt to invade India in 1944. He was well known to the 14th Army as an ironic, friendly and efficient administrator in whose bungalow you could get a drink of zu (Assam rice spirit which tastes like acid in car batteries), listen to records of *The Magic Flute* or complain about the Corps Commander. If one didn't know all that already, it would be easy to guess it from his book. *Enough of Action* is divided into two parts—the first about public school, university and finishing school; the second mainly about India. The former is all good fun, but doesn't compare with the Indian section. The jokes and the stories are all too narrowly private; while the stories about Indian Governors' wives, teaplanters' whisky and diffidently heroic pre-war soldiers are exactly public enough; just what we had expected, and even a little worse.

Mr. Lydall was also in Assam, Quetta and Kabul. One of the most amusing chapters of his book was written of a period of the North-West Frontier. It starts: "One morning when I was trying my chauffeur for murder, an excited tribesman rushed up. 'Sahib!' he shouted. 'Woodcock!' 'The Court,' I pronounced, 'is adjourned.'" Yes, it is a droll, attractive book. But somehow after reading it one is left with some feeling of dissatisfaction. He was a very good administrator and he did know his Naga headhunters and his Pathans well. One feels that much more could come out of this experience and this character. What a fascinating book he could write—and perhaps will write—about the ICS of the last few years of British rule in India. It would go well with *Hindoo Holiday*. And if he does write it let's hope he won't be *too* friendly. More of the complaints about that Corps Commander might have lived on.

Mr. Kingdon-Ward's latest book is about botanising trips he made to the forested mountains of Burma between 1937 and 1939. In his preface he writes: "It is hoped that this book will interest the naturalist and anyone engaged in modern scientific exploration whether in Burma or elsewhere. Perhaps it is too much to hope that it will interest the general reader . . ." He need not worry. To enjoy this gusty, enquiring book a general reader need know nothing much more than what a rhododendron looks like, or a begonia, or a saxifrage. It is an adventure book patterned with flowers. Mr. Kingdon-Ward's methods of classifying rhododendrons may shock some of the specialists—but *he* climbs 13,000 feet to see them, lives on quinine, is eaten by sandflies and leeches, falls into rivers, drinks curdled tinned milk—and is rewarded, as we are rewarded with him, by those moments of excitement that even the most unenterprising botanist sometimes has:

> Finally, down in the stem of the funnel, jammed into crevices above the splashing water, I spotted two plants from a little distance, and with beating heart clambered down to them. One was the small tufted *Allium* with narrow grass-like leaves and nodding white flowers . . . an extraordinarily dainty rock plant. At sight of the other, though the flowers were long since over, my heart leapt. There was no mistaking the strap-shaped leaves, like well-worn washleather, or the stem with its cluster of crumbling charred-paper capsules packed with coffee-brown seeds—a rare alpine *Primula*.

He lived for months, on the first trip, alone with native porters—ploughing through monsoon mud to this remote country which is one of the two or three chief homes of rhododendrons in the world. He is one of our greatest experts on rhododendrons; and has been collecting them for over 30 years. The second expedition, to north-east Burma, was a more general one,

financed by the American Museum of Natural History. He went with the party as the botanist. There is more wild life in this part of the country; and with precise and colourful descriptions of the flowers go his comments on the gaily-coloured and oddly named Burmese birds (some, on one occasion with their heads covered with pollen from the rhododendrons); and on the gibbons; and the tree shrews.

It is a fresh, knowledgeable book, a fresh look at exploration and flowers—fresh as is his own description of seeing the trees from above, a bird's view of rounded tops, moving leaves, the gaudy embrace of creepers: an exciting view best seen from a tree-skimming light aeroplane. The photographs are excellent but the conventional travel scenes might easily have been discarded in favour of more flower pictures.

BERNARD GUTTERIDGE

NEW NOVELS

Miss Lonelyhearts. By NATHANAEL WEST. *Grey Walls Press.* 7s. 6d.
The Woman of Rome. By ALBERTO MORAVIA. *Secker & Warburg.* 12s. 6d.
Line on Ginger. By ROBIN MAUGHAM. *Chapman & Hall.* 7s. 6d.
Blenheim Orange. By H. W. FREEMAN. *Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

There is an old and only too rarely questioned principle of literary criticism that the artist, like the general, can get on very well without great intellect. If a novelist is the proud possessor of a philosophy we are not over-impressed—we take it with Tolstoy, or leave it with Lawrence. But if a philosophy is too portentous a thing to ask of a novelist, a "point of view" is not; no novelist of importance can do without it, and when we judge a novel we are, ultimately, judging the quality of its writer's mind. Off-hand I can think of no great novel which exists independent of its creator, but it needs no mind-searching to think of dozens of mediocre self-contained novels. They demonstrate, as they appear week by week, the immense difficulty of attaining even so simple-sounding a thing as a point of view.

Signor Moravia, Mr. West and Mr. Maugham have points of view. Moravia's shines very palely through most of his long novel, Mr. Robin Maugham's is like a light which has been lit before, but Nathanael West's is a flame in each of the dazzling sentences of his little book. West died in 1940 when he was thirty-four and *Miss Lonelyhearts* was published in 1933, although this is its first English publication. The date is important—the "Brother, can't you spare a dime" and "Ain't it grand to be bloomin' well dead" period, the post-slump world. *Miss Lonelyhearts* is as shapely as a sonnet, as concentrated as an epigram. Miss Lonelyhearts is a male sob-sister on a New York paper who finds his work is no longer a joke—the illiterate horror-letters show him that life is foul and that he himself shares in its foulness; he, Comforter to thousands, finds he needs his own Comforter, Christ—the Miss Lonelyhearts of Miss Lonelyhearts, as the cynical news-editor, Shrike, puts it. Miss Lonelyhearts can do nothing, and after a period of semi-delirium he decides that only Love can cure the world; he is shot dead by a cripple towards whom he is running with outstretched arms of love. *Miss Lonelyhearts* is a savage Christian parable, the product of that interesting type of mind which seems to be controlled by a Christian background and yet is repelled by it. All the implications of this can be seen in the ironical death of the hero. Miss Lonelyhearts seems to speak for the author when he says to his girl friend, the book's symbol for the normal:

> "What a kind bitch you are! As soon as anyone acts viciously, you say he's sick. Wife torturers, rapers of small children, according to you they're all sick. No morality, only medicine. Well, I'm not sick. I don't need any of your damned aspirin. I've got a Christ complex. Humanity . . . I'm a humanity lover. All the broken bastards . . ."

The passage shows the spirit of the book, the toughness, the touch of sentimentality, its vitality and the audacious passion with which it attacks the vast problem of human suffering. West had an immense amount to say about existence in his hundred-odd pages, and he had as resounding a point of view as any evangelical tub-thumper. In his most perceptive introduction to this edition Mr. Alan Ross says that West recorded the emotional chart of his society, and certainly he was unconsciously in agreement with Balzac's conception of the novelist as a man who records "the moral history of his age"; but he is not cribbed and cabinned in his age—the point of view still stands though the society has changed.

Adriana, the narrator of *The Woman of Rome*, is an honest whore, though the word is too violent for this charming, sensitive creature, the like of whom must rarely be seen on the Via Nazionale. Some of her adventures would have made Moll Flanders blush, but Cleo de Mérode could not have written of them in more lady-like a way. Moravia, however, hasn't intended to concentrate on her professional life except as it is involved in her emotional life. She has four lovers and it is the failure of the first, Gino, to marry her which, unconvincingly, sends her down the path of shame. The lovers are well done. Astarita, the police chief has a masochistic love for her. Mino, whom she loves, a student half-heartedly distributing anti-Mussolini literature, is bewildered and frightened by sex. Sonzogno, the most powerfully drawn of the four, is a murderer, a psychopathic brute who horrifies and fascinates her, and by whom, at the end of the book, she ironically finds herself pregnant. The lovers are not aware of each other's existence and Adriana naturally becomes the focal point. But that was not good enough and Moravia's problem was to inter-relate the four lovers in some vital way. With Gino this was impossible and, having landed Adriana in the street he is dropped; for the others the sort of plot has been contrived with which Hollywood "B" pictures have made us familiar. As a fluid pudding the novel would have been successful, but Moravia has tried to give fluid shape, with the result that the force and imagination of parts goes for nothing—and we have neither a realistic picture of a Roman prostitute's life nor a profound enquiry into the human mind. So the point of view is undecided, and Moravia has produced a readable but idea-less novel which borders on the *kitsch;* and that could never be said of his earlier, shorter books. He seems to be a writer more at home in the *conte* than in a long novel, whose architechtonics possibly inhibit him.

Line on Ginger is Mr. Robin Maugham's second story. *The Servant*, published last year, revealed a promising talent, but the present volume disappoints. One might say that Mr. Maugham's point of view is that of the officer to his men (the master-valet relationship of *The Servant* was a variation of this) and this becomes vaguely irritating by being made into a *mystique*. *Line on Ginger* is told in the first person by an ex-officer who visits former members of his unit in an attempt to discover why Ginger, who had also been in the unit, has turned burglar. The reasons form almost an anthology of the popular novelist's explanations of wickedness—a sadistic step-father, a humiliating affair at a tender age with a wealthy nymphomaniac, producing that wonderful hold-all "a grudge against society." Fortunately most of the book is taken up by the narrator's visits to his ex-comrades in which he sees the various ways in which they have taken to civilian life. Here is Mr. Maugham's interest, and like Moravia he has made a red herring out of a unifying contrivance. *Line on Ginger* might have been an excellent long picaresque novel and Mr. Maugham has the required liveliness of style and dialogue. But even so the book is readable and as professionally turned as many works from the pen of the author's uncle. Now and then, indeed, the voice of Ashenden comes through plainly: "There is only one bed in my flat and I propose to sleep in it."

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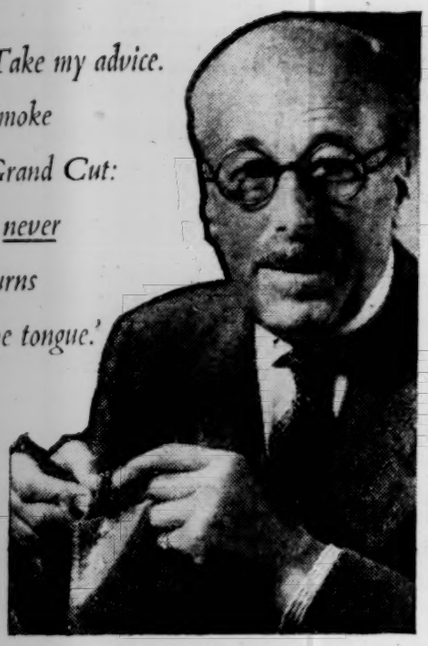

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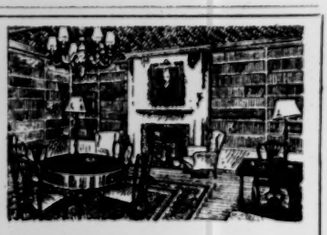

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It is a pity that space allows no more than a note about Mr. H. W. Freeman's new novel, *Blenheim Orange*. The author of *Joseph and his Brethren* may have supplied Miss Stella Gibbons with not a few ideas, but his Suffolk novels have great charm and distinction. The present novel is his first for many years, but is in the same *genre*. It is about a village girl who rises in the world but cannot discard her old way of life. The plot is odd but the handling is excellent.

MICHAEL SWAN

BERDYAEV IN PERSPECTIVE

The Divine and the Human. By NICOLAS BERDYAEV. *Geoffrey Bles.* 18*s.*

The writings of Berdyaev have been appearing in English for rather more than fifteen years. At first they were issued by a Catholic firm, in shiny black bindings with modernistic, sans-serif lettering in scarlet or yellow. Whether somebody then informed this publisher that this kind of apocalyptic thinking did not really help the Catholic cause, I do not know. At any rate, in the later Thirties, Berdyaev began to be published by the Centenary Press in shaggy black bindings with ordinary gilt lettering, white wrappers edged with red and enthusiastic quotations from Anglican clergy. I have, I think, at one time or another read all these translated works, and, looking back on them now, as the final manuscripts begin to appear posthumously, what especially occurs to me is that here was a Christian publicist who never caused me to experience either crude anger or disgust. Irritation, yes. Boredom, yes. But, heavy with temperament as the man's writing is, one never had the impression that what he was saying concealed either a party line or a private ambition.

In the earlier, Dostoevsky-guided books, there is evident masochism, a revelling in black futures and the mission of the Russian soul. The vocabulary remains to the end rebarbatively laden with unfamiliar terms of Greek origin. Berdyaev was always too quick to assume importance and to characterise his own thought, comparing himself with previous thinkers. Nevertheless, there was a transparency about it all (child-like, dare one say?) and an intuitive freshness later to be shown at their best in *Solitude and Society*, where it is precisely a question of metaphysical intuition, and *Slavery and Freedom*, the most compendious if not the sharpest analysis of contemporary forms of intellectual bad faith, affected as it may have been by Jaspers's only work of popularisation, translated as *Man in the Modern Age*.

The Divine and the Human was written during the last year of the war. It is a short book and looks as if it may have to be regarded as the introduction to a promised *Truth and Revelation*, which is to do for revealed dogma what Kant did for pure and practical reason. I am not sure to what extent it is a Christian book. I suspect that the majority of professed Christians in this country are in fact unitarians, and I am uncertain whether a unitarian is a Christian. Berdyaev called his own religion trinitarian, but its trinity consisted of God, man and the Holy Spirit, which is "the principle of union between God and the creature." He believed in theophany, but it is doubtful if he believed that the birth of a Jewish child was uniquely and definitely theophanous. It is perhaps for this reason that his work seemed so little repulsive to a benevolent agnostic, with his vague sense of the numinous and his persistent feeling that something new appeared in the world during or immediately after the life-time of that Jewish child.

Against the legalistic scheme of redemption, Berdyaev certainly had some very harsh things to say, and, for myself, I should dearly have liked to see him devote to the vindictive nursery gods of Mauriac and Greene some of the minute attention he gave, in *Solitude and Society*, to Proust's conception of time. Berdyaev did not believe in Hell, which to him simply reflected our own limitless sadism. Nor, in the Catholic sense, did he believe in that favourite tonic for emotional debility, sin. The church he thought neither a perfected structure nor a final repository of truth but a provisional, symbolic reminder of the kingdom on earth which it existed to anticipate. At the same time, he was hostile to the neo-Lutheran theology of crisis, which he considered degrading to man and therefore to God.

For it was in divine-human interplay (dialogue, as Buber would say) that Berdyaev located all religious truth. His starting-point was the cry of the seventeenth-century Silesian poet Johann Scheffler ("Angelus Silesius"): "I know that without me God cannot live for an instant." Even to revelation, man is not passively recipient. Atheism is a moment in the knowledge of God and a movement towards apocatastasis or the restitution of all things. Berdyaev, a Wagnerian figure in floppy beret, loose cravat, long hair and beard, had a nervous tic about the mouth which he attempted to cover with his hand, so that it appeared as if his jaw had dropped and he had paused to replace it. To such an excess of astonishment, one felt, the spectacle of this world must nevertheless from time to time provoke the man who cultivated this generous and humane vision.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

GEORGE WASHINGTON

George Washington. A Biography. By DOUGLAS SOUTHALL FREEMAN. Vols. I and II. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 36*s.*

It is only a few years since George Washington stepped out of the realm of hagiography and began to be accepted as a suitable subject for analysis by the ordinary canons of historical research. Behind the portentous waxwork created by the joint effort of that Parson Weems whom every Janeite will recognise as an American cousin of Mr. Collins, and that John Marshall who may well have been a great judge, but lacked even the qualities of Lord Campbell as a biographer, there really did lie a genuine human being who did not live permanently upon an inaccessible pedestal. The credit of first seeing this belongs to the well-known popular novelist, Mr. Rupert Hughes. Once he had broken the cake of custom, the professionals, a little shyly perhaps, began to follow. Now Mr. Freeman, who has already written an admirable life of Robert E. Lee, has given us the first two volumes of what will clearly be, for many years to come, the standard life of the first American President. It is based on massive research. He examines a far greater range of material than any previous biographer has sought to do. If a little portentous in places, a little slow in narrative, he yet sets the portrait in a humanly intelligible background, without pose and without affectation. In these first two volumes, which bring the story down to 1758, Mr. Freeman has made us see, almost stroke by stroke, all the elements of which the later Washington was compounded. One may feel, as I do, that it is excessive to devote eight hundred pages to years when Washington was little more than a promising young man of high character, with all that made him important still to come; all the same, Mr. Freeman has managed, very skilfully, to maintain the reader's interest. But I hope that Mr. Freeman's regard for the majesty of his subject will still leave him free to insist that he can cover the next thirty years of Washington's life in another four volumes. Washington is the man with whom he is concerned. He must be careful to leave to others—he is on the boundary-line of danger—the task of writing the history of the United States from 1776 until Washington died. There is a point at which the biographer of any man, after six volumes, is somewhat too much with us, like dinner-guests who stay too long after the decent moment for withdrawal. Putting in the warts on a portrait does not necessarily mean making everything, face and all, more than life-size.

That said, Mr. Freeman deserves high praise for his achievement. His Washington is an intelligible outcome of the Virginia of his day, a solid character, disciplined to resolution, even to obstinacy, by the experience of war against the French and the Indians. He is not brilliant; he is not profound. He is a young man who works hard, has a high sense of serious purpose, a power to insist on his own dignity, an acute sense of business, and a determination to stand on his own feet. He learned a great deal from handling the complex problems of a plantation economy: hardly less from the delicate divisions in the politics and society of the proud estate among the families of which he stood so high: and, perhaps most of all, from the patience required in handling troops on military adventures where any grave error in an officer's judgment could easily have produced a situation out of which mutiny might grow. Washington learned there, not to be a great soldier—was he ever a great soldier?—but the art of leadership; he learned how to impose himself. He learned to think before he acted; he learned to be cool, to be patient, to make men accept him at his own valuation.

It is good to note that Mr. Freeman leaves him here at a point where nothing more could be predicted of Washington than that all would respect him who knew him. He had integrity. He was certainly anxious to be just. It was quite reasonable that he should be ambitious to get on: that he should resent being treated as a "colonial": that he should be something of a snob: that he should have a good deal of emotional sensitiveness about his character: that he could be greedy and suspicious and jealous, and that he could be done with an old love, even though she was the wife of a close friend, before he embarked on a marriage with the rich and beautiful young widow, Mrs. Martha Curtis. He was not a very generous person. He was poor and confused in public discussion. There is not a trace of a sense of humour. His religion was little more than the external respect a serious and ambitious young Virginian of good family felt it decent to pay to tradition—in an important sense his reserve was already a calculated reserve; he always counted the chances carefully before he embarked on any risk. He disliked criticism. He never let slip any chance of wealth where he could acquire it honestly. He set a high value on himself. He had courage and determination and a clear head. Save in relation to himself, *point de zèle* might well have been his motto. There is not a trace of the passionate temper of Hamilton, the infinite curiosity of Jefferson, the wisdom and ingenuity of Franklin. One sees in him one of those solid Conservative country gentlemen who retires early from the Guards, has had a passionate affair which wins nothing but an attractive flirtatiousness in reply, and then, after a solid marriage, settles down on the estate to be a figure on the Bench, and perhaps, out of duty, sits on the County Council and is constant in attendance there, again out of a sense of duty. He is the kind of man who sees nothing to amuse in the habits of poachers, and, while he will take his glass with any man after dinner, has a cold contempt for his neighbour who drinks himself under the table. He is courteous, but cold, respected by all, but giving himself wholly to no one. Had Washington died in 1758, he would hardly have been a figure even for the state custodian of Virginia to glance at as he went on his way.

What, then, lay at the root of the overwhelming change during the next twenty years in the man whose pre-eminence no one even thought of bringing into question after the Peace of 1763? I agree with Mr. Freeman that the answer is an overwhelming ambition for public esteem, the hunger for fame, the craving to be the first in any company to which he belonged. It was an entirely honourable ambition. It never stooped to the mean or to the corrupt in its search for fulfilment. But it was an ambition which burned in him like a fire. The soldier is passionate for glory—the country gentlemen is a determined business man aiming at wealth as the means to power. He had estates, land, the knowledge of the socially eminent in Virgina. He would use all of them, increase all of them, to make himself the outstanding man. He was on the lookout for great opportunities. He would under no conditions remain an obscure Virginian, whose colonial colonelcy rated only as the equivalent of a captaincy in an English regiment. He did not forget that difference. When the conditions developed to give it many other valencies than those of 1758, it was easy for Colonel Washington, retired, to go from his beautiful country home to take command of the American forces. He knew when his hour had struck: and he marched directly to his rendezvous with immortality.

HAROLD J. LASKI

THE NEW REMORSE

The Stories of Ernest Dowson. Edited by MARK LONGAKER. *W. H. Allen.* 7s. 6d.

Nobody can tell who discovered first that all-forgiving phrase, the Naughty Nineties, but alliteration is at times an aid to truth. The plain fact is that the so-called decadents, despite their addiction to French literature and drink, really failed to convey a foreign sense of sin though they made desperate attempts to do so. But the romantic legend of *les désespérés* still persists and Yeats, who should have known better, added to it in some of his nostalgic poems and in his memoirs. Yeats himself escaped these imaginary soul-troubles in the very middle of the Nineties by using as a literary theory the anti-nomianism of Blake. While Dowson and Johnson were rapidly shortening their lives in the taverns, Yeats was proclaiming, in complete Irish sobriety, his comfortable creed:—

I see the blessedest soul in the world
And he nods a drunken head.

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lo! with a little rod
I did but touch the honey of romance—
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?

Dr. Mark Longaker has written a full-length biography of Ernest Dowson, in which he has collected all the available material. In particular he has set down the memories of the widow of Robert Sherrard, to whose little house at Catford the poet was taken in a dying condition. Unfortunately, the book has only been published in America, and we must still depend on the brief memoirs of Arthur Symons and Victor Plarr.

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Having convicted himself of great guilt because he drank, went with prostitutes, and was not practical enough to marry the young girl with whom he had fallen in love, Dowson found in poetry a means of romantic purification. In consequence his poems might be read by the innocent with complete immunity: their dim regrets, their roses and shadows express the vague cravings of adolescence. Even the popularity of his best-known poem, *Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae*, shows how a dangerous theme can be resolved. The languorous music of his Alexandrines might indeed be suspect but for its hidden discipline which owes much to the elegiac cadences of Propertius. It is generally assumed that Dowson, had he not succumbed to self-neglect and consumption, would not have developed: but there is one poem of his which hints at a firmer mood. Is it too much to discover in these lines an anticipation of the manner in which Yeats was writing, almost a generation later, in *Responsibilities*?

> Because I am idolatrous and have besought,
> With grievous supplication and consuming prayer,
> The admirable image that my dreams have wrought
> Out of her swan's neck and her dark, abundant hair:
> The jealous gods, who brook no worship save their own,
> Turned my live idol marble and her heart to stone.

Ernest Dowson cared more for his prose than for his verse, according to a remark which he made to Arthur Symons, but we can take his words as a mere expression of moodiness. He had little gift for story-telling and attempted vainly to conform with ordinary standards. It is convenient, however, that Dr. Longaker should have reprinted *Dilemmas: Stories and Studies in Sentiment*, and rescued stray pieces from *The Yellow Book*, the *Century Guild Hobby Horse* and other periodicals. But the judgment of Richard Le Gallienne, who read *Dilemmas* for Lane in 1894, remains apt:

> He applies very delicate literary treatment to somewhat hackneyed themes—at least in the case of two of his stories, *The Souvenirs of an Egoist* and *The Story of a Violin*. The great musical composer who started life as an organ-grinder, the second violin in an orchestra, next to unknown, who was once the guardian and tutor of the fashionable prima-donna (like little Bows in Pendennis) are very old acquaintances in fiction.

Like most writers of the Nineties, Dowson gave much care to his prose and, though we may be delayed by occasional Gallicisms, his sentences move pleasantly:

> Looking out now, the phantasmagoria of the boulevards was obliterated and those old days floated up before him. Long before Woolwich: that time when he was a Lycéen, in the winter holidays. A vision so distinct! His mother's *salon*, the ancient, withered furniture, the faded silk of the Louis XV chairs, the worn carpet: his mother's refined and suffering face, the quaint birdlike features of the two old Mesdemoiselles de la Touche—the near neighbours of his mother and the most intimate gossips round her couch—two ancient sisters, very noble and very withered, dating from Charles X, absorbed in good works, in the merits of their confessor, and in the exile of Frohsdorf. Very shadowy figures, more shadowy even than that of himself, in the trim uniform of his Lycée; a grave and rather silent boy, saddened by the twilight of that house, the atmosphere of his invalid mother.

The later stories are of biographical interest for they show the poet with naive assiduity indulging in day dreams. He transposes the theme of his own deliberate and unhappy love. The Soho waitress, to whom he failed to propose, appears as a lovely maiden amid the apple-blossom of Brittany and, in rather unkind way, he immures her within a convent, where, as we may suppose, she lives happily ever afterwards. In another story she appears as a wealthy, sophisticated widow who, by a tragi-comedy of errors, has married the wrong man—the widow, too, is bundled into a convent. Only one sketch has a note of sombre reality, *The Dying of Francis Donne*. Here, with a calmness which is impressive, the poet broods over his own coming death. He had taken refuge in Catholicism, but the easy faith expressed in his poems is dispelled in these stark pages. The magniloquent phrases of the Latin liturgy roll through his memory, but they express only a pathetic possibility. The few prose-poems which Dr. Longaker has piously collected are of little value when we compare them with those of Baudelaire. But the last of them, *The Princess of Dreams*, shows that Dowson could have escaped eventually from the moonlight. "Some say, moreover, that her tower is not of ivory and that she is not even virtuous nor a princess."

AUSTIN CLARKE

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

Symphonies. BRAHMS: No. 1 in C minor (Concertgebouw/Van Beinum. AK1895-9). A grand performance, except for the solo violin in the Adagio, which is curiously shaky and poor in tone. Tempi throughout very nice. Recording spacious and agreeable. Now the best of the available sets. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: No. 6 in E minor (LSO/Boult. C3873-6). This is one of the most original and deeply impressive works of art to emerge from the late war. The performance is a fine one and the recording does almost everything possible to convey the overwhelming effect of sinister and mysterious sadness which the work produces in the concert hall. In the Epilogue the absolute command, *senza crescendo*, is not quite consistently observed, and the oboe solo on the final page is not nearly distant enough. Otherwise this is an outstanding issue.

Concertos. BEETHOVEN: No. 4 in G major (Casadesus/Philadelphia/Ormandy. LX1198-1201). There is nothing here—either in M. Casadesus's frigid solo, or in the perfunctory orchestral playing—to make us wish to part with the excellent Schnabel set (H.M.V.). Tone quality and balance bad. MEDTNER: No. 1 in C minor. Op. 33 (Medtner/Philharmonia/Weldon. Also *Canzona Matinata*, Op. 39, No. 4; *Sonata Tragica*, Op. 39, No. 5: Medtner (piano). Songs: *The Ravens*, Op. 52, No. 2; *Serenade*, Op. 28, No. 2, Oda Solbodskaya/Medtner. Medtner Society vol. III). Most people will, I think, find Medtner's First Concerto not much better or worse than the others. Impossible not to admire the pianistic invention, and the purely musical beauty—from bar to bar, as it were; but somehow the whole thing refuses to add up. If the piano had occasionally been given more than a few bars' rest; if the texture had been less monotonous; if the changes of rhythm and tempo had brought corresponding changes of colour: then, perhaps, the sense of strain—of nimiety—which descends on many listeners after the first few pages of these concertos, might have been replaced by a sustained pleasure. As it is, I believe this composer is at his best in quite short pieces, and above all in his songs. Neither category is particularly well represented in this album. Recording careful.

Miscellaneous Orchestral. WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll* (Vienna Phil./Furtwängler. DB6916-7). If this piece is to be performed with a much larger body of strings than Wagner intended, the conductor must take especial care that all the woodwind detail emerge with the utmost clarity. The tone of this set is lovely, and the atmosphere most authentic; but it cannot be said that the string-wind balance is satisfactory. DVORAK: *The Golden Spinning Wheel* (RPO/Beecham. DB6656-8). The complicated legend on which this tone poem is based (a hunter king, a beautiful girl blinded and maimed by a jealous stepmother, a magician, a magic spinning wheel) would defy illustration by a composer far less naive than Dvorak. But if we ignore the silly story, we shall be charmed, again and again, by the freshness and grace of the music, by the exquisite scoring, and by a splendid performance most faithfully recorded. GLINKA: *Jota Aragonesa* (Philharmonia/Malko. C3878). The first recording of an interesting oddity. Theme the same as that used by Liszt in his *Spanish Rhapsody*. Performance sparkling and recording very bril-

liant. BIZET: *L'Arlésienne Suite* 1 (Prelude Adagietto, Minuet) *Suite* 2 (Farandole); PUCCINI: *Manon Lescaut*—Intermezzo Act 3 (NSO/Beer. AK1278-80). This performance has neither the vivacity nor the beautiful phrasing of the old Beecham set; but it is adequate, and the good modern recording gives it a distinct advantage over other available sets. The fill-up is an attractive piece of emotional music, very well played. WEBER: *Preciosa*—Overture (Turin Sym. Orch./Rossi. K2184). Part of the incidental music to a play about a gypsy girl, this lively piece is in Weber's happiest and most picturesque vein. The limpid score is beautifully handled and the recording is exemplary. ELGAR: *Serenade for Strings*, Op. 20 (Hallé/Barbirolli. B9778-9). Now the best version of this charming little work. RAVEL: *Alborada del Gracioso* (Suisse Romande/Ansermet. K1609). Originally—and essentially—a virtuoso piano piece, in which form it has been perfectly recorded by Lipatti (Col). The orchestral version adds nothing and is not particularly well managed on this disc.

Chamber Music, Piano Solo, Organ. BEETHOVEN: String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95 (Griller Qt. AK2185-7). From this set alone I derive the impression that Beethoven is not the Griller Quartet's strong suit. Admirably studied (after a rather uncertain first page), their performance is nevertheless too delicate and finicky for the character of the music. The *pp* is almost silence, the *ff* never really strong enough. The Busch set (H.M.V.), although made as far back as 1933, is in perfect style and the recording is still quite acceptable. PROKOFIEV: Violin Sonata No. 1, Op. 80 (Menuhin/Gazelle. DB9376-8). A very beautiful work, almost unique in Prokofiev's output for depth of feeling. The performance is wonderfully fluent and (except in the brief Scherzo) agreeable in tone. Recording balance excellent. BRAHMS: *Variations on a Theme by Paganini*, Books I and II (Michelangeli. DB6909-10). Michelangeli executes these studies—the Mount Everest of the piano—with a technical brilliance that makes one hold one's breath. This is great playing and the piano tone is most realistic. The issue, then, is in most respects superior to Petri's; but I must warn readers that Michelangeli omits two variations (No. 9 in both Books) and telescopes together the two finales, so as to form one; a procedure which, although not ineffective, is artistically dubious, and for recording purposes (I should have thought) unnecessary. LISZT: *Feux Follets*, and RAVEL: *Toccata* (Moura Lympany. C3870). In my view, this is Miss Lympany's best record to date. *Feux Follets* is delightfully neat and feathery, and in the Ravel *Toccata* (from "Le Tombeau de Couperin") the performance surpasses in assurance even that of Moiseiwitsch. Piano tone well realised from top to bottom of register, but disc surface rather heavy. HAYDN: *Fantasia in C major* (Col DB2545). A charming and characteristic piece, very stylishly played and pleasantly recorded. CHOPIN: *Etudes*, Op. 10: No. 3, E major; No. 5, G flat major, No. 12, C minor (Malcuzynski. LX1203). Technically a very good record indeed, but Malcuzynski's readings—especially of the first two of these *Etudes*—are heavy and unlit by the slightest gleam of fancy. For the E major *Etude* I recommend Solomon (H.M.V.), for the other two Horowitz (H.M.V.) and Kentner (Col) respectively. FRANCK: *Chorale No. 2, B minor* (Marcel Dupré. AK2188-9). Perhaps the finest, though not the most immediately taking, of Franck's three Chorales. Marcel Dupré gives a noble and meditative performance, lucidly registered. The recording leaves nothing to be desired.

Vocal. STRAUSS: *Elektra*—Excerpts (Schlüter/Welitsch/Schoeffler/Erbach/Widdop/Chorus/RPO/Beecham. DB9393-6). With one or two small cuts, this is a complete recording of the last three phases of the action, from the moment when Orestes surprises Elektra grubbing up the axe with which her father was murdered. The recording could have been better managed: the balance (especially in the first two sides) favours the voices at the expense of the orchestra, and some of the heavier climaxes distort badly. Erna Schlüter, in the name part, does not maintain a very steady tone in the more strenuous passages; but her style is truly dramatic and her voice contrasts well with the Chrysothemis of Ljuba Welitsch. Sir Thomas Beecham's conduct of the score is masterly: the final scene, in particular, has a sweep and grandeur which are quite unforgettable. No one should miss this set, for it is doubtful whether Strauss's imagination ever worked at whiter heat than in this tremendous score. MUSSORGSKY: *Boris Godunov*—Death of Boris (Raphael Arié/LSO/Krips. K2229). A splendid record. Raphael Arié's Boris is in the best tradition—that of Chaliapin—noble in tone and discreet in dramatic feeling. The soloist, chorus and orchestra are extremely well balanced. GLUCK: *Orfeo*—"Che faro"; PURCELL: *Dido and Aeneas*—"When I am laid in Earth" (Flagstad/Philharmonia/Braithwaite. DB6913). "Che faro" is taken a little too fast, and Mme Flagstad's delivery could be thought unsuitably impassive. On the other hand, she gives a beautifully grave and sweet rendering, distinguished by excellent English diction, of Dido's lament. The orchestral playing and the balance are above the average in such records. MOZART: *Don Giovanni*—"Madamina," Act 1 (Erich Kunz/Vienna Phil./Ackermann. LB81). Well up to the very high standard set by Herr Kunz's former Mozart discs. WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger*—Act 3—"Wahn! Wahn!" (Paul Schoeffler/NSO/Rankl. K1573). Distinctly inferior to Janssen's record (H.M.V.). VERDI: *Un Ballo in Maschera*—"Morrò, ma prima in grazia"; *La Forza del Destino*—"Pace, pace, mio Dio" (Joan Hammond / Philharmonia / Braithwaite. C3879). One of the best of Miss Hammond's recent discs. The orchestral part is unusually well played. MADRIGALS: "Hark all ye lovely saints above" (Weelkes); "It was a lover and his lass" (Morley); "Rest sweet nymphs" (Pilkington) (The Danensian Singers. B9790). This enchanting record supports the claim that madrigals should be sung by a small ensemble, rather than by a choir. These examples are touchingly beautiful and extremely well sung, by five girls from the High School and four boys from the Grammar School at Doncaster. The recording is quite comfortable.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No 1,016

Set by Naomi Lewis

Prizes are offered for a 250-word extract (or, where appropriate, 16 lines of verse) from one of the following works: *Jane Eyre*, by Jane Austen; *Henry Esmond*, by Henry James; *The Importance of Being Earnest*, by Ernest Hemingway; *Portrait of Mr. W. H.*, by W. H. Auden; *The Fortunes of Nigel*, by Nigel Balchin. Entries by August 16.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1,013

Set by Farragon

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION puts a team into the field to play a Test Match. Competitors are required to select an Eleven from the regular contributors, not forgetting, if necessary, the best players in Week-end Competitions, and to describe with telegraphic brevity the qualities of the players that justify the choice of the Selection Committee.

Report by Farragon

By and large, the Selectors agreed upon the first seven or eight as the mainstay of any Test Eleven. Their main difficulty was that, on the whole, NEW STATESMAN AND NATION Players (few of them, by the way, "Gentlemen") are bowlers usually taking other people's wickets and not so often having to defend their own. As no nomination of umpires was requested, no one told "Solomon Eagle" and Clifford Sharp to "stand" in white coats. "K.M." was the expected majority choice as captain, P.W.C. adding the point that he is "fond of bold declarations."

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